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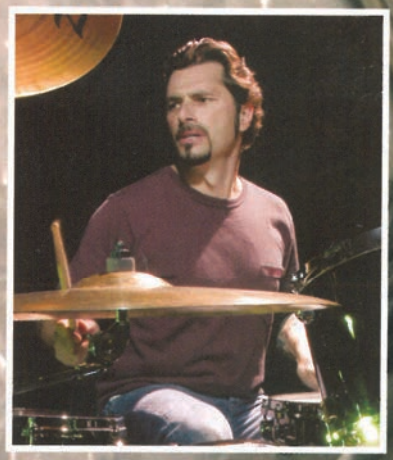

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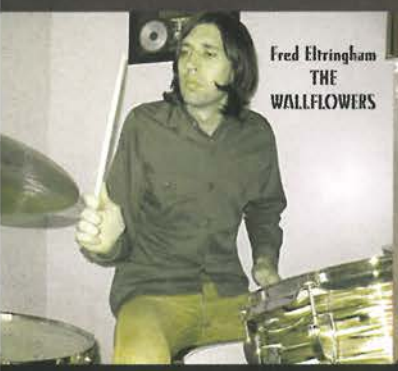

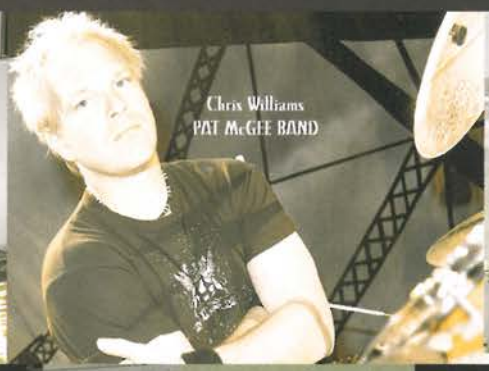

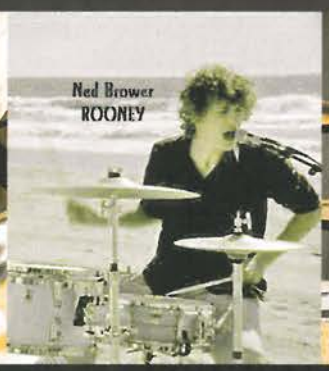

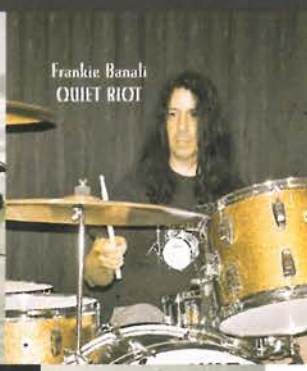

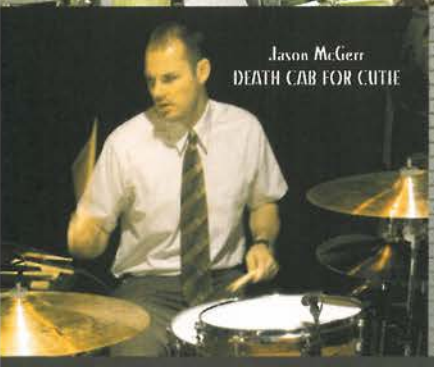

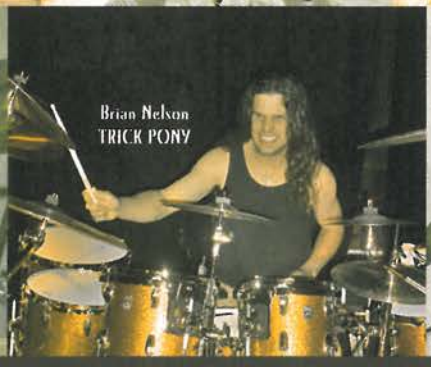

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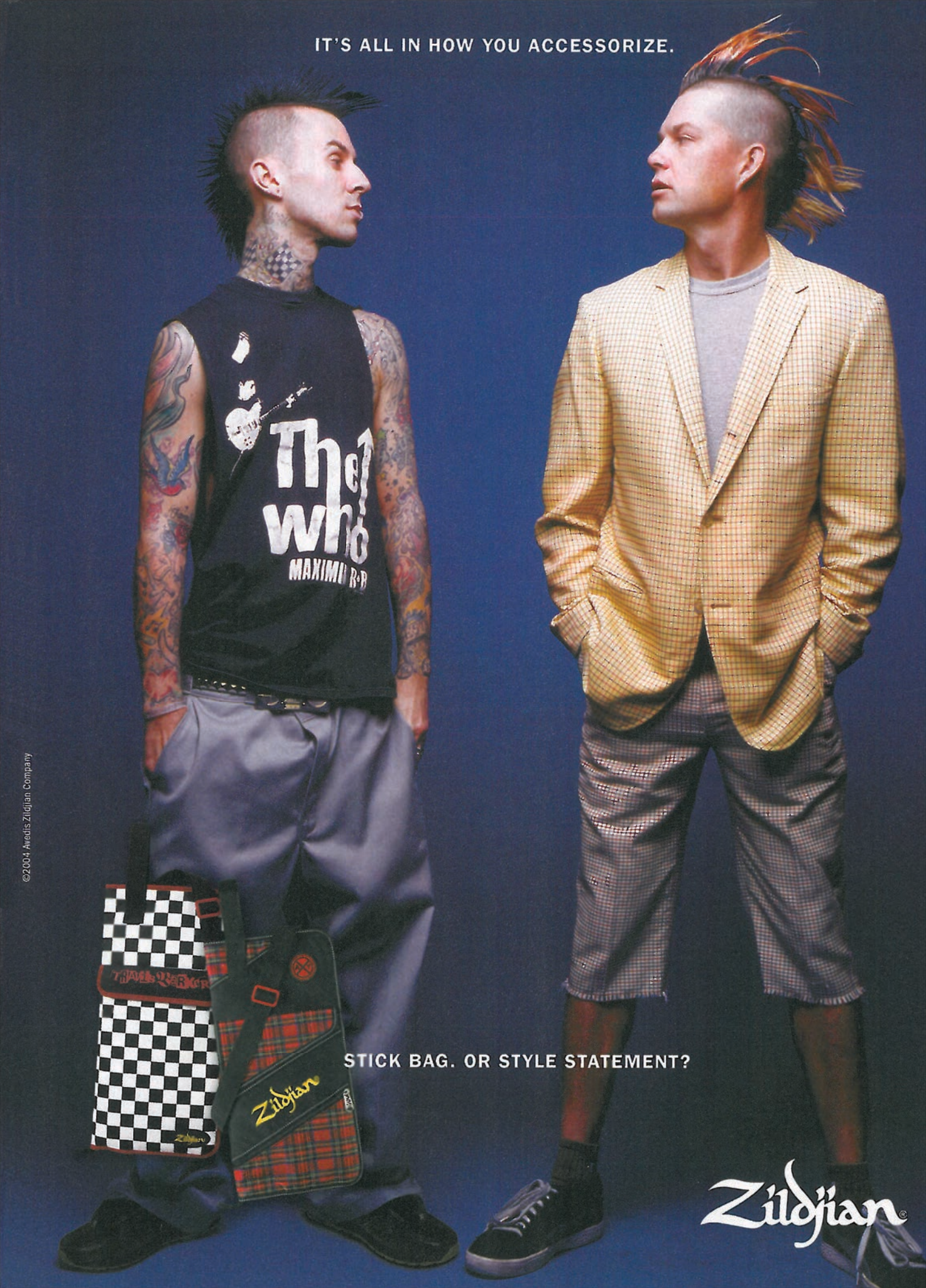
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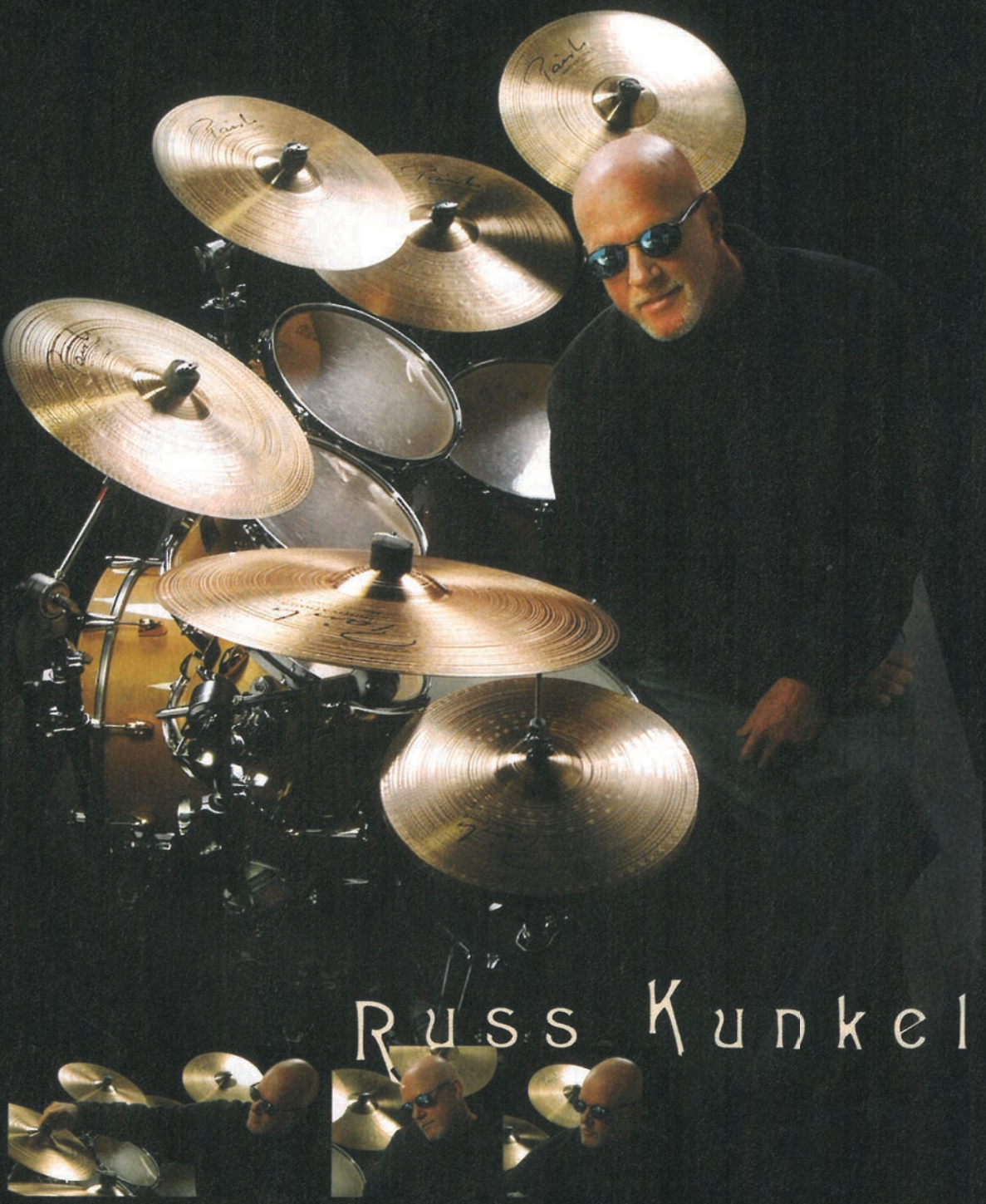

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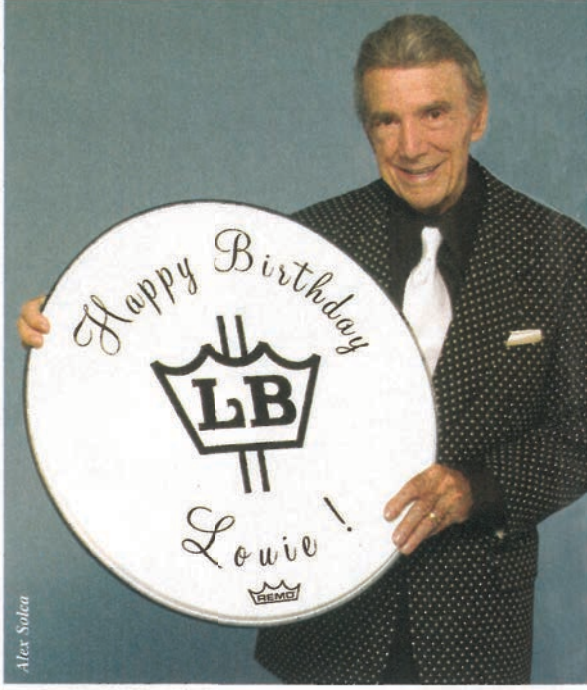

Louie Bellson 44

To some he's the father of double bass. To others he's the epitome of the drummer/composer. To others still, he's the classy firecracker behind Duke Ellington. Louie Bellson is all those things—and *much* more. On the occasion of his eightieth birthday, *MD* salutes a true master.
Special feature: A Louie Style & Analysis by John Riley
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Helmet's John Tempesta 68

Metal monster John Tempesta sure has some killer names on his résumé: Exodus, Testament, Rob Zombie, Black Label Society—and now the return of meticulous math-metallers Helmet.
by Gail Worley

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A lot of bands play fast...a lot more play loud. But nobody does fast and loud like Dillinger Escape Plan. Meet Chris Pennie, the man who drives the craziest train in rock.
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From The Bottom Up
Modern Drummer's Bass Drum Supplement 87

In many ways, the bass drum is the most mysterious of drums. The sheer number of available sizes, tuning concepts, head types, and muffling choices can make even a seasoned vet dizzy. In this exclusive supplement, *MD* examines every aspect of the kick drum, from heads and mic's to specialty beaters and tuning options. You won't want to miss this one!

WIN! WIN! WIN! WIN! WIN! WIN! WIN! WIN!

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From The Bottom Up

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AN **EDITOR'S** OVERVIEW

Ch Ch Ch Changes...

"Turn and face the strange...." Many people, myself included, are a little afraid of change. Why? Well, it's easy to settle into a comfortable routine, worrying about upsetting the apple cart and wondering, "What if this or that bad thing happens as a result?" But this attitude ignores the *good* things that might come from change, which we'll never experience if we don't take chances. Anyway, if the new direction doesn't work out, we can always go back to "the old way."

One of the biggest changes in my life (next to cutting my hair recently!) was deciding if I wanted to spend my life on the road touring, or settle down at home with my family and get a "real" job. I was petrified; playing was what I did all my life. That's what I knew. What would I do otherwise?

I decided to take a chance, to turn and face the strange. Now I wake up at the time I used to go to bed. But I have more responsibilities than I ever did before, so instead of playing and partying all night, among other things, I occasionally roadie for my sixteen-year-old son, who's out doing the same thing I was doing at his age: dreaming of making music his career. My new role did take some getting used to, but thankfully it's all worked out.

I still play drums—I'm sure I'll play for the rest of my life—but now my main career responsibility is being part of the team that brings you *Modern Drummer* every month.

And speaking of change, you might have noticed some of the new ideas we've recently introduced at *Modern Drummer*. Really, it's just more of the kind of innovation *MD* has always embraced, though we think you'll especially enjoy some of our recent moves. Be sure to pay attention in the coming months as well.

For now, though...what a jam-packed issue you have in your hands! For starters, this month we celebrate the legendary Louie Bellson, who shares his memories of a life in jazz *very* few musicians can claim to have been a part of. Then—talk about changes—we bring you the powerhouse John Tempesta, one of the most accomplished drummers of modern heavy music. Elsewhere we take you on an exploration of all things bass drum, in our exclusive special "From The Bottom Up."

In closing, I'd like to thank each and every *MD* reader for helping make my own personal life change a pleasurable experience, for giving me an outlet to express my feelings, and for your continued support in helping keep *Modern Drummer* the most open-minded, forward-looking drum magazine in the world.

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The World's Most Widely Read Drum Magazine

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Number 12

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LENNY & ZORO

Robyn Flans totally blew my drumheads off with her article on Lenny Kravitz and Zoro. I haven't been able to put down my magazine since I received it. The way the story goes back and forth with each one of these great musicians is remarkable. That's my kind of read. What a compliment not just to the artists, but to the writer also!

You folks at *Modern Drummer* have sure boosted your magazine's professionalism, appearance, and rock-solid articles. I'll bet that Ron Spagnardi is looking down and nodding his head, and I'm equally sure that the main man in heaven is in agreement. Keep it coming. **Dave Betti**

I've been reading *MD* for twenty-four years, and I have almost every issue published. My least favorite to date is the September 2004 issue, because of the Lenny Kravitz and Zoro interview. I normally look forward to every story by Robyn Flans, because it usually means an insightful read. However, this time I'm puzzled by the number of wasted pages. **Joseph Ciucombare**

JEAN-PAUL GASTER

Jean-Paul Gaster of Clutch has been one of drumming's best-kept secrets—and unsung heroes—for way too long. Your September story finally gave him a chance to display his knowledge, his versatility, and his enthusiasm for drumming. He's a humble guy, considering his exceptional talent, but he speaks articulately about the art form he loves. So much for the image of the mindless rocker! **Fred Besterman**

CAPE BRETON DRUMFEST REPORT

We run the Cape Breton International Drum Festival, in Nova Scotia, Canada. Your September *Backbeats* covered our 2004 event with a great article by Jim Cornall.

We are very grateful for the support that *Modern Drummer*—and in particular Rick Van Horn—has *always* given our festival. We would also like to thank Ralph Angelillo of the Montreal DrumFest, who has helped us on many occasions with good advice.

Running a major international festival is a long and arduous task, but we are never short of friends and colleagues for support. *Modern Drummer* has helped us to let the world know what we are doing, and for this we are deeply indebted. Thanks for your commitment to drumming, no matter where in the world it is.

Bruce and Gloria Jean Aitken
Cape Breton International Drum Festival

IMPROVING STICK GRIP

After reading the September *It's Questionable* letter from David C. Burnett regarding his desire to improve stick grip while reducing hand cramping, I'd like to offer the following suggestion.

I've tried many products over the years with varied success. Grip tape? No way! Hair spray? Not on your life! Sticks Grip (a brush-on coating) offers a great grip, but it's labor-intensive and a *mess* to apply. It also takes twenty-four hours to dry. Gorilla Snot works well, but tends to dry up and crust over in the jar.

The best—and just about the cheapest—solution I've found is a simple pine tar rag, which can be found in the baseball section of your local sporting goods store. Just before the gig, wipe down the butt-ends of your sticks, and you're off to the races.

I play with a loose grip. My hands are so

THE DRUMMERS OF CIRQUE DU SOLEIL

I was surprised and very glad when I opened my September *MD* and saw Larry Aberman's article "The Drummers Of Cirque du Soleil." I caught the *Zumanity* show in late June, and was in awe of what the drummer played. I was curious who was up there, effortlessly flowing from classical to jazz to Afro-Cuban to fusion. Now I know! Please continue to include such a broad spectrum of drummers in *MD*. **Eric Lawton**

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Hey, if it's good enough for Babe Ruth, it's good enough for me. **Charlie Mayer**

Gretsch Trademark Protection

The September *Readers' Platform* carried Fred Gretsch's response to May's *Shop Talk* article. In it, he explained why he feels compelled to protect the Gretsch name "to the nth degree"—even to the point of searching eBay. Is he kidding? While Fred is deciding what kind of car to buy for his kids—a Porsche or a Ferrari—most of the sellers on eBay are struggling to make mortgage payments.

Fred Gretsch should be embarrassed at taking this hard-line view. After reading his letter, I will not buy or recommend any Gretsch products for myself or any of my students. As for Fred and his company, I wish him luck. He'll need it! **Gary Randazzo**

If Gretsch spent more time improving the quality control and value of their drums than on protecting their trademark, they wouldn't have to work so hard to prop up the value of that trademark and protect themselves from copycats. Gretsch should devote its energies to building drums of unmatchable quality and sound. Doing so would leave their competitors in the dust, and would widen the gap between genuine Gretsch products and copycats so much that even the most ignorant of drummers could tell them apart. **David Chang**

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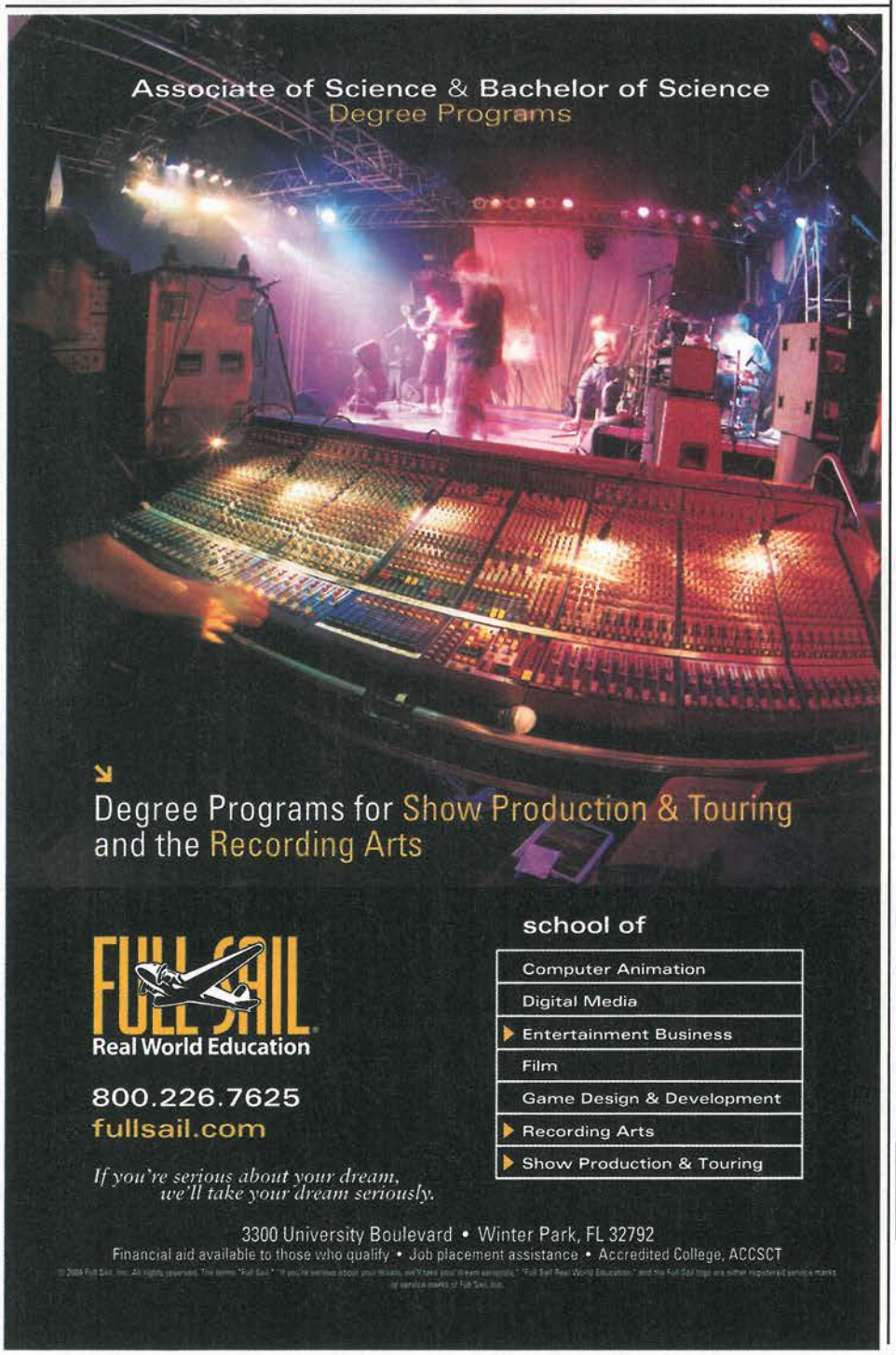

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FEEDBACK

"I had to let you know how well the Paragons are performing, now that I've been able to play them in the studio and onstage. Let me tell you, they shine, big-time! From the bell of the ride to the swell of the crashes, they have exceeded my expectations – but equaled my hopes! From riding on my 18" crash (in my Keith Moon impersonation in "Summertime Blues"), to getting tight, precise hi-hat and ride cymbal definition, to the contrasting Chinese models – a soft wash of texture with the 19", a hard crunch of attack with the 20" – and the punchy 'punctuation' of the splashes, the responses are truly spectacular. All the theorizing, testing, and development have really paid off, as the qualities I wanted to achieve with Paragon are absolutely there."

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Stick Twirling And Pedal Stomping

I have two questions. First, I have no idea how to twirl my drumsticks while playing. Can you suggest any resources to help me develop this showmanship technique?

Second, I've been playing double pedal on a DW7000 for a year now, and no matter how hard I practice I'm not seeing much improvement. I've purchased heavy beaters and ankle weights to practice with, and I practice about two hours a day. Any advice you can offer would be greatly appreciated. **Steve**

MD presented an extensive feature about drumstick twirling in the January 2003 issue. You can contact our back-issue department at rozm@moderndrummer.com to see about ordering a copy. You might also want to check out *Drumstick Spinology*, by Steve Stockmal. He offers book and DVD versions at www.drstix.com.

Developing double-pedal speed takes time; there are no shortcuts. There are several good instructional books and videos on the subject, several of which are mentioned in this issue's special bass drum feature. We naturally recommend our own *Encyclopedia Of Double Bass Drumming*, which you can order through the *MD* library or buy in many drum shops. And Rod Morgenstein offers an excellent article on double bass drum technique on page 110 of this issue (the first in a series).

It is sometimes possible to improve your double pedal performance by playing on a better double pedal. While the DW7000 is a fine unit for its price, it's a budget model, and as such isn't the smoothest or fastest-operating pedal out there. Visit your local drumshop and try out some of the higher-priced models...just to find out whether your limitations have to do with your playing or your pedal. If you find that you can instantly play better on a higher-quality pedal, then you might want to consider an upgrade. If the pedal doesn't seem to make any difference, then it's back to the woodshed!

A Double-Depth Bass Drum

I have two 18x24 bass drums. Is there a way to connect the two to create a single-drum assembly with an extra-deep sound? The trick is, I want to keep the whole monster detachable so it's easier to haul around. A 36"-deep drum just won't fit in my car. Any help would be appreciated. **Sam Kazamskee**

You could connect the two drums by using floor-tom leg brackets and straight rods (similar to floor tom legs). Match the position of the brackets on each drum—one on either side. You might need to use some sort of gasket under the brackets to ensure that the connecting rods clear the bass drum hoops.

Make sure that the bass drum spurs are adjusted the same when you set up each drum, so that the drum rims match up. Depending on the length of the connecting rods, you'll be able to adjust how close together or far apart the drums are, in order to get the best effect. If you have traditional T-rods on your bass drums, you might want to consider swapping to drumkey-operated rods on the facing sides of each drum, so as to allow for unobstructed positioning of the drums.

What Are F.A.S.T. Drums?

What is meant by F.A.S.T. tom sizes? Is that an acronym, and if so, for what? How do I distinguish F.A.S.T. tom sizes from others? **Bruce Trimble**

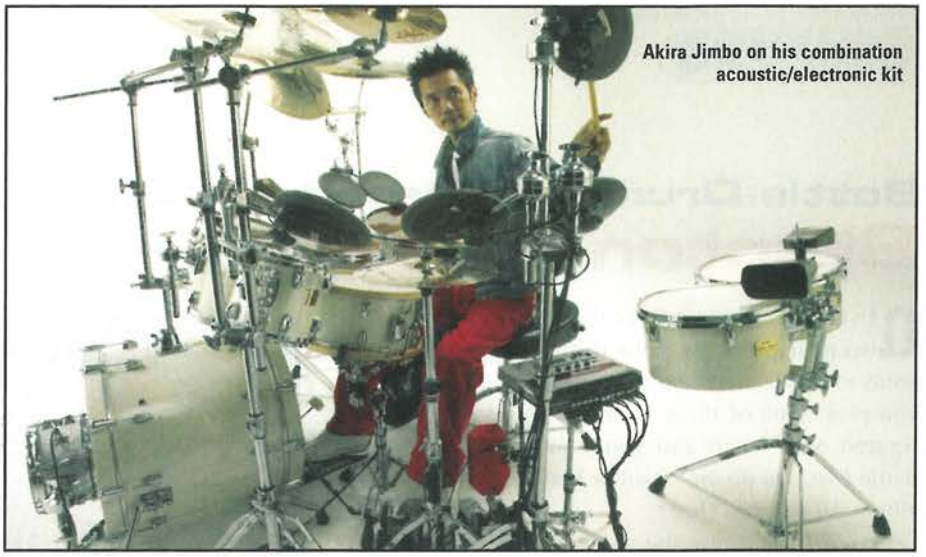
The term "F.A.S.T." is indeed an acronym, coined several years ago by Drum Workshop. It stands for "Fundamental Accurately Sized Toms." These sizes (7x8, 8x10, 9x12, etc.) are slightly deeper than traditional-sized toms, but shallower than "power" sizes. According to Scott Donnell, DW director of marketing, "We feel that F.A.S.T. sizes provide drummers with maximum attack and fundamental, along with a round, full, resonant tone that is perfect for most playing situations."

This design option has been adopted by many other manufacturers, who offer similarly sized toms under different model designations.

A DW kit featuring F.A.S.T. tom sizes.

Triggering Patch Changes

I want to find a device that will allow me to change MIDI patches from a piezo trigger. I only need increment and decrement. This will allow me to change sounds with a stick hit rather than a foot pedal (very cumbersome and clumsy). I saw Akiro Jimbo do this, and I'm wondering what is out there that will accomplish it. **David S. Paviol**



Akira Jimbo on his combination acoustic/electronic kit

MD electronics wiz Rick Long responds, "The answer to your question is found within the sound module setup menus. When you attach a drum pad to a sound module, the module is usually set up so that the signal from the pad triggers a drum sound found inside the module. But it doesn't have to be that way. The input settings can be programmed so that the signal causes the module to change patches.

"Akira Jimbo is a Yamaha endorser, so he is using DTX modules. The owner's manual has simple instructions that explain how to go through the module's menus to find the input settings. It's easy to set up the inputs so that a bar pad with two trigger surfaces can be used for this task. Just make sure the sensitivity is set high enough that a stick hit on one pad doesn't also trigger the pad next to it.

"Here's a bit of added information: Increment and decrement usually mean 'move the patch number up one' and 'move the patch number down one,' respectively. This means that you can move from patch 1 to patch 2, patch 2 to 3, patch 3 back to 2, and so forth.

"For a bit more advanced capabilities, you can go into the Yamaha 'Chain' mode and set up a string of patches that aren't in order. You can then use the increment/decrement pads to move between patches along the chain. This allows you to use, for instance, patches 1, 4, 29, and 7, in whatever order you wish.

"Akira puts a lot of advance time into programming his performances, but the end results are spectacular. He covers the subject in depth on his *Wasabi* and *Fujiyama* DVDs, which are offered by Carl Fischer."

Questions For MD's Drum Experts?

Send them to It's Questionable, Modern Drummer, 12 Old Bridge Road, Cedar Grove, NJ 07009, rvh@moderndrummer.com. Please include your full name with your question.

Bottle-Drumming Secrets From Galactic's
Stanton Moore

Q Ever since I heard Galactic for the first time, I've been inspired by your drumming. You always seem to create new and fresh grooves for every song you play. One of these fresh grooves I haven't quite figured out: Where did you hear of playing a glass bottle like you do on "Stanton Hits The Bottle" on the album *All Kooked Out!*?

I tried to recreate the same sound by placing an upside-down empty bottle on a boom cymbal stand. But the bottle moved when I played it, and it also rattled against the stand. After about two days of playing it this way, the bottle shattered all over the floor!

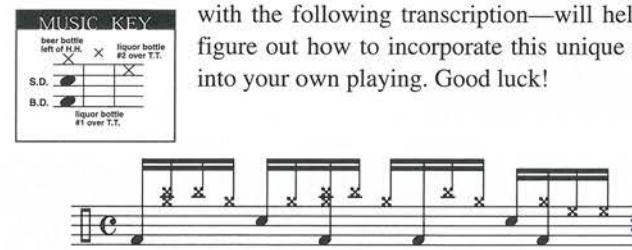
I'd love to know how you mount the bottle and play it without breaking it. Or are the different bottle sounds just samples played with triggers or electronic pads? **Dean Christesen**

Paul La Raia

A Hello Dean! I originally started incorporating bottles into the set because of the influence of the Mardi Gras Indians in New Orleans. Along with traditional tambourines and cowbells, they often incorporate bottles and other found objects into their music.

I originally started holding a bottle with one hand while playing between the bottle and kit with the other hand. Don't worry, I've broken many myself. I've found that clear glass breaks the easiest. Go for green or brown glass. Also, beer bottles break easier than liquor bottles.

For the tune you mention, I actually had two engineers hold three bottles for me. One engineer held a beer bottle to the left of my hi-hat while the other engineer held two differently pitched liquor bottles over my rack tom. I played the beer bottle with my left hand while I played between the other bottles and snare with my right. Hopefully this explanation—along with the following transcription—will help you figure out how to incorporate this unique sound into your own playing. Good luck!



John Mayer's Nir Z: Setup For Squares

Q I'd like to thank you for your inspiring and tasty playing on John Mayer's *Room For Squares* album. Each track is a fantastic lesson on how to support a song.

I'm interested to know what your setup was for this recording—particularly the snare drum on "Neon," as well as the sizzle cymbal that appears beautifully throughout the recording. Thanks again for the inspiration. **Jodi Nepveu**

A First of all, thank you for your kind letter. I've been—and still am—inspired by so many great drummers out there. I'm glad I can give something back.

John Mayer's record was fun to play on, thanks to John's brilliant songs and the flowing chemistry between all the players involved. The drums I played on the record were my GMS Grand Masters, including a 9x12 tom, 14x14 and 16x16 floor toms, and an 18x22 bass drum. I used Evans G2 coated heads on the tops of the toms and the snare, with clear G1s on the bottoms of the toms. The bass drum had a clear EQ3 batter.

I'm not sure which of my GMS snare drums I used on "Neon." I do know that I used my $6\frac{1}{2}$x14 solid ash snare on many of the songs. I still play it a lot. Whether I tune it high or low, it sounds great.

The cymbals I played were all Sabians. I mixed AA and HH models, depending on the sound I was looking for. The sizzle cymbal is an 18" AA medium thin crash with four rivets. In the past three years I've been using some HHX models too. I especially love the new Evolution crash cymbals.

Thanks again for your questions.

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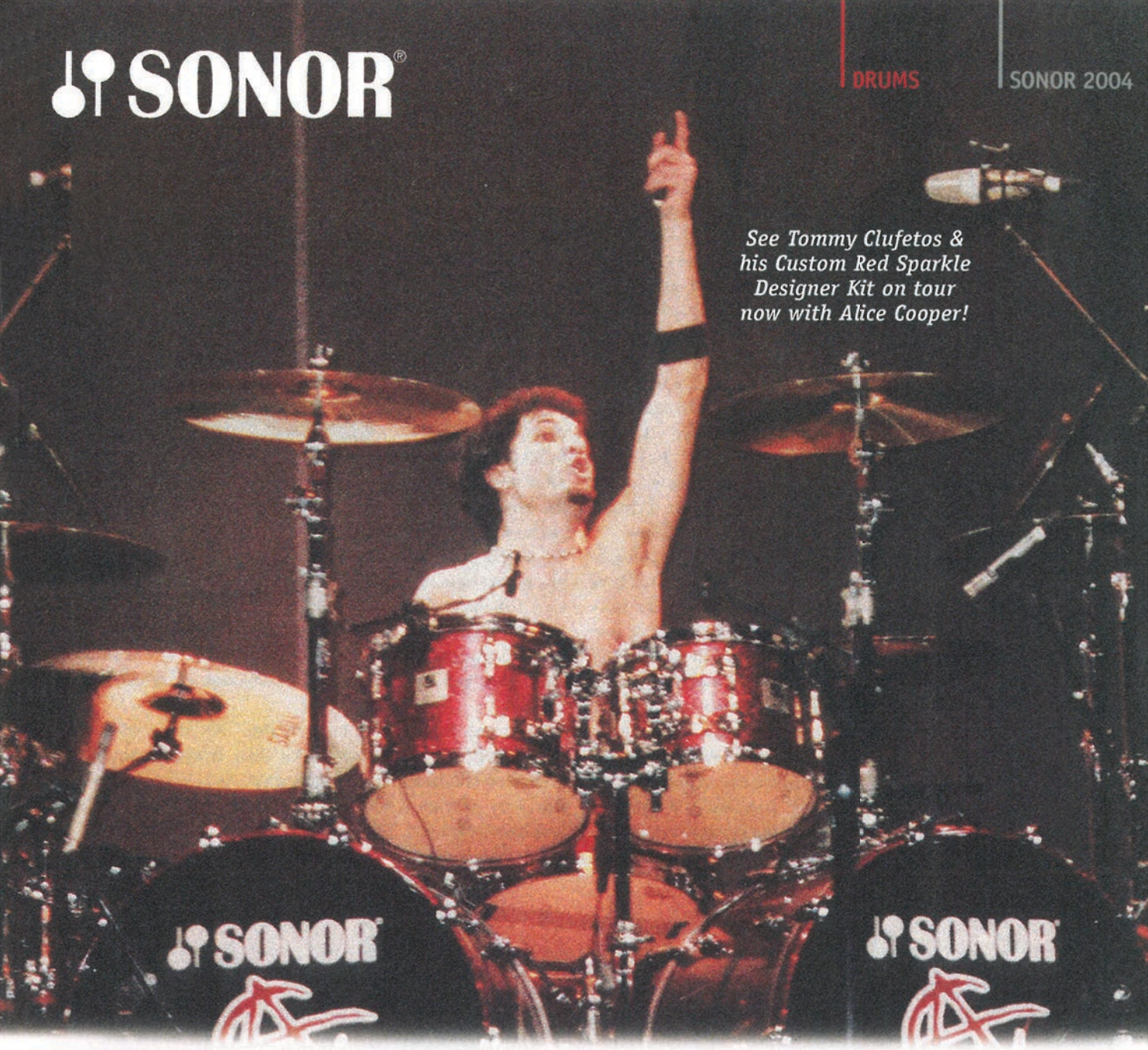

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Health And Practice Tips From Cheap Trick's

Bun E. Carlos

Q I've been fascinated with your style and versatility for many years. You've given me the inspiration and drive to be a greater drummer. With that in mind, I was concerned to hear that you were ill after Cheap Trick's Seattle show earlier this year. I hope you're well now.

I've always wanted to know if you had any formal training (private instruction) or if you are self-taught. I spent many hours listening to and watching videos or live footage of you playing, and I owe many thanks to you for teaching me a lot of your tricks. I'm also intrigued at the ease with which you play either right-handed or left-handed. How did you discover the secret to switch-hitting? Thanks for all the years of pure joy and entertainment. **Kat Almlie**

A Thanks for the compliments! Regarding my "illness" in Seattle, what actually happened was that I fainted two hours after the show. At the hospital, tests showed that I had "sweated out" all my potassium. So now I drink some type of sports drink and/or eat a banana after a hot and sweaty gig, and I encourage everyone to do the same.

I had one drum lesson, back in 1967. My main education in playing lefty on a right-handed kit came from watching Dennis Wilson of The Beach Boys do the same. Also, when I learn a new lick, I try to learn it *both* left- and right-handed—to hear which way has a better feel. Thanks again!

Would you like to ask your favorite drummer a question?

Send it to Ask A Pro, Modern Drummer, 12 Old Bridge Rd., Cedar Grove, NJ 07009. Or you may email rvh@moderndrummer.com. We will do our best to pursue every inquiry.

Repeat Bar

A Classic Quote From MD's Past

"I've always been excited by learning. I think that's what life is all about. There's so much to discover. Every time I sit down to play, I find new things."

Tower Of Power's **David Garibaldi**, February 1991

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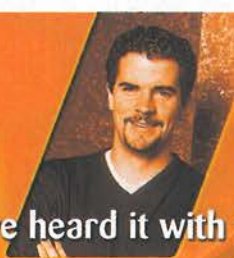

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– Russ Miller

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Eddie Bayers "I work with some of the best engineers in the world, and they all love it! When I'm booked on sessions, the engineers request the Subkick... that speaks for itself."

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HATEBREED'S

Matt Byrne

On The Rise

You know that warm, fuzzy feeling you get with certain people? Well, when Matt Byrne first joined Hatebreed in 1998, that feeling just wasn't there. "We didn't get along," says the drummer. "We didn't click." So Byrne left the ferocious metal-core band the following year and went back to college to become an elementary school teacher.

But it turns out that no grudges were held between the two parties. In fact, Byrne was invited to drum for Hatebreed again in 2001, during the band's Ozzfest run. And by the following year, it was official: Byrne was back in the band and recording their pulverizing second album, *Perseverance*.

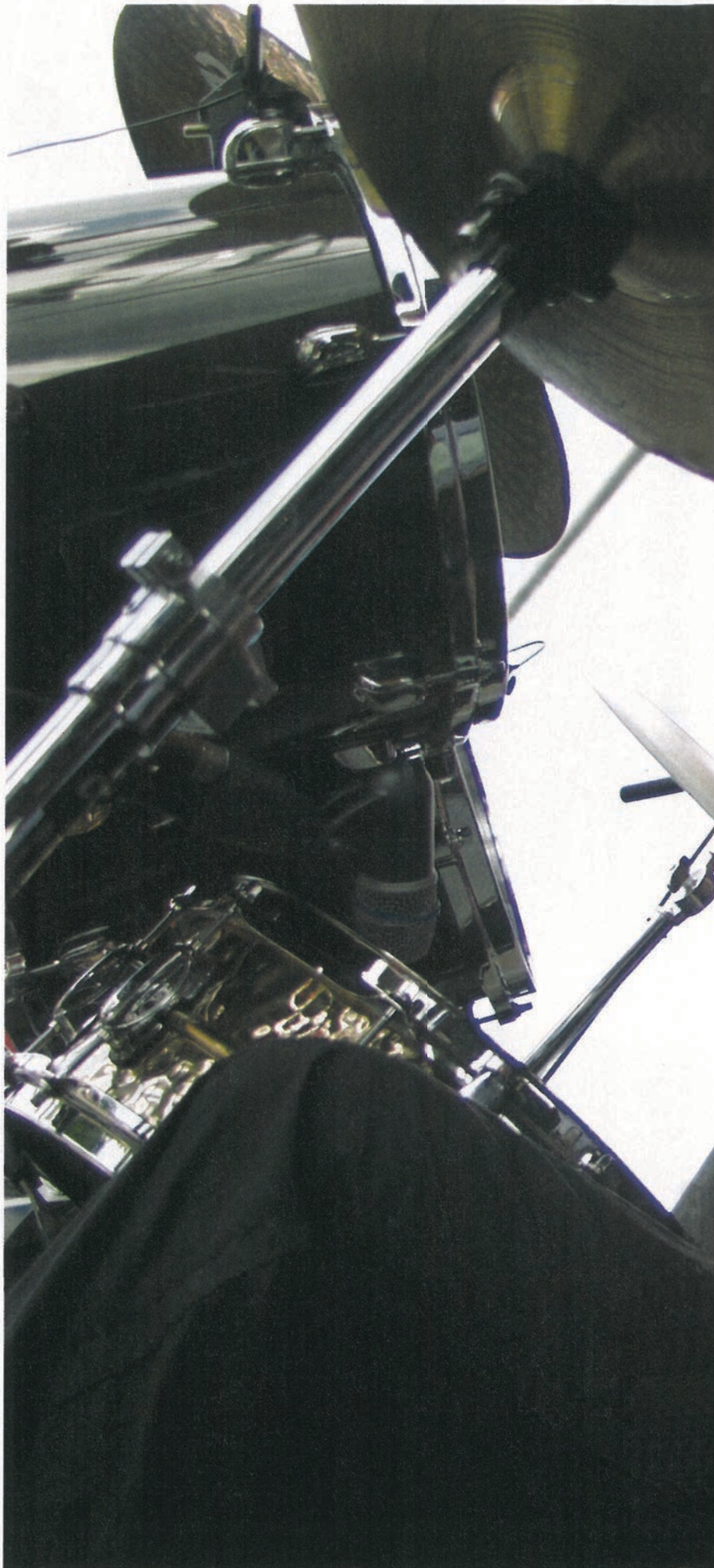
The sessions for that album moved quickly. "It was like, 'Alright, let's do it,' and 'Okay, it's done,'" Byrne says. Things were different, however, when Byrne drummed on Hatebreed's most recent album, *The Rise Of Brutality*. "The writing process was long," he reports, "and there was more time to play around with the songs because I knew them better. And the drumming is more out-front and in-your-face."

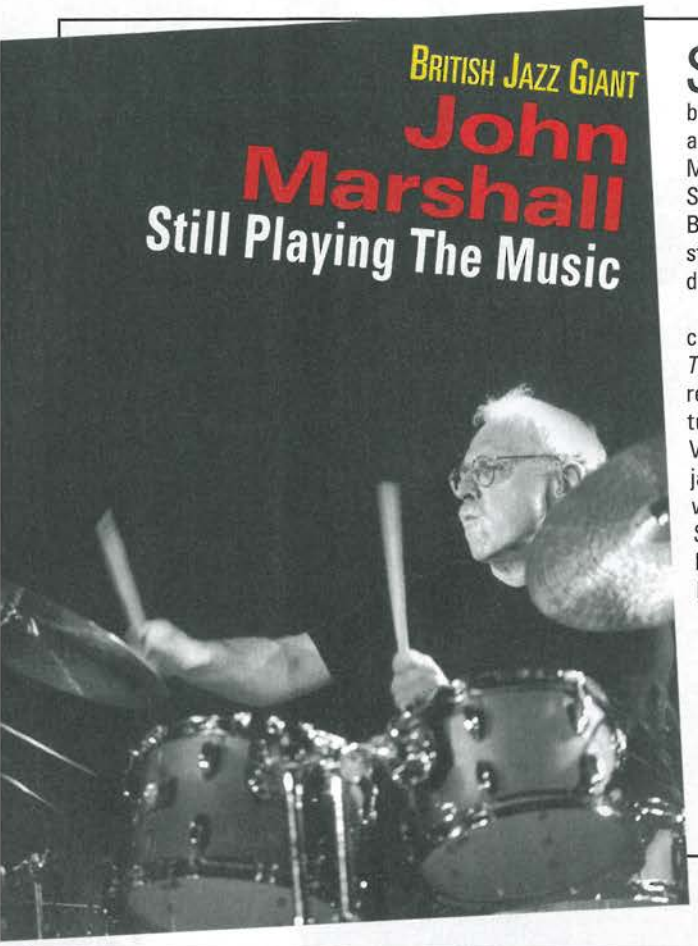
Byrne's chops cut especially deep on "Beholder Of Justice," which "chugs along with double bass and a lot of cool fills on top," he notes. Byrne's equally proud of the brutish "Doomsayer." "The fills almost sound like someone falling down the stairs, like in a cartoon."

If you think these tunes sound insane on the album, wait till you hear them live. "When the crowd goes crazy, it amps us up even more," Byrne says. That, in turn, amps the crowd up even more. Byrne recalls the time he got the boot—literally. "We were doing the Jagermeister tour in Washington, DC, and a combat boot came flying up at my head," he remembers. "I looked up at the right time, straightened my body, and *bam*, it hit my chest and almost knocked the stick out of my hand."

Not everyone at Hatebreed shows are nailing Byrne with boots, though. The band's raging New York–style hardcore/thrash inspires plenty of old-school-ish camaraderie. "People come up to us all the time at gigs," Byrne says. "One guy told me, 'I can relate to "Unloved" [off *Perseverance*] because I've been in situations where I felt down and no one cared, but you really got me through it.' At hardcore shows back in the day, you could forget your problems and fit in. I think people relate to our music the same way."

Jeff Perlah





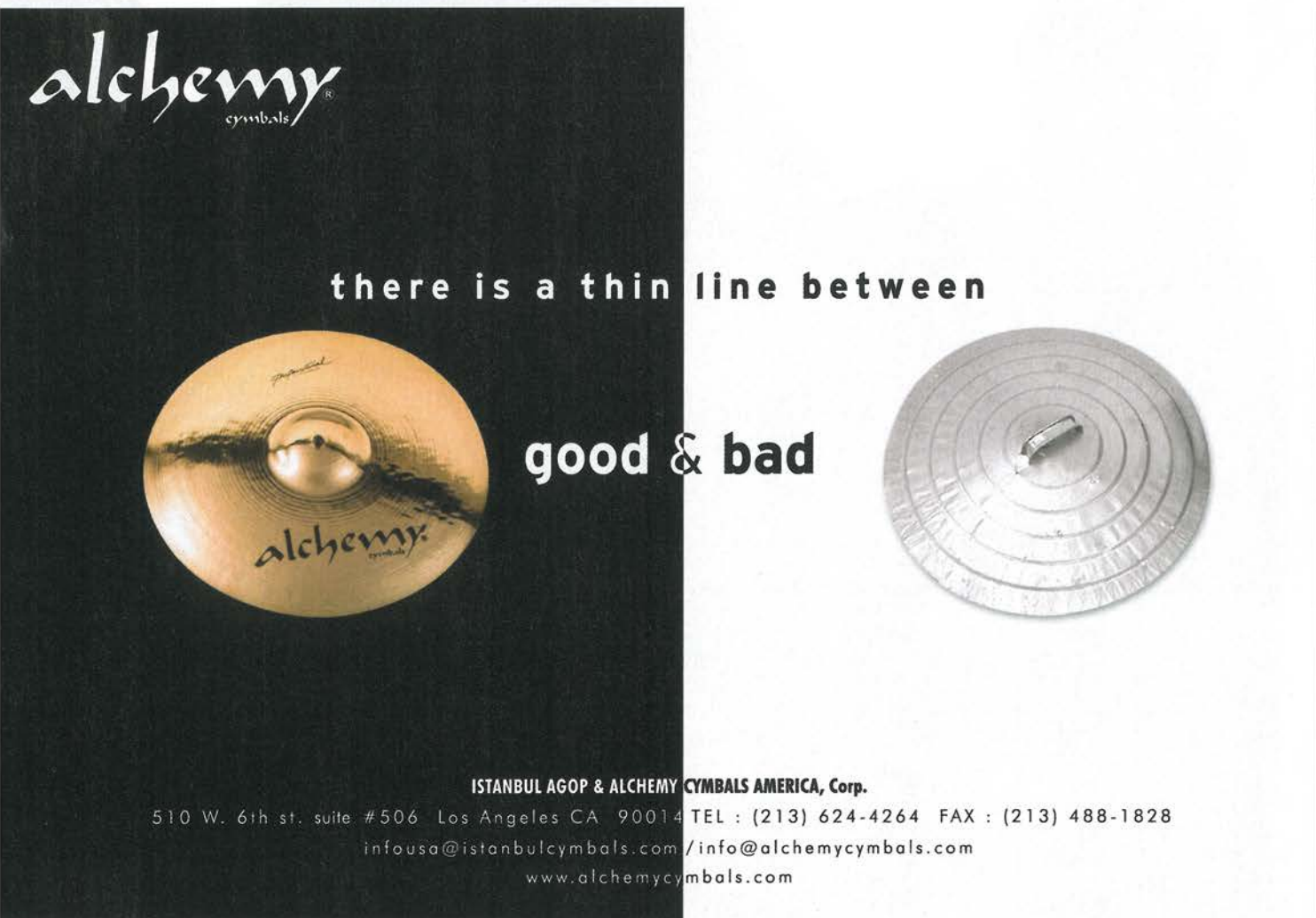
Since the '60s, John Marshall's presence behind the drums has been a guarantee of lively and interactive music. A fixture in British jazz, Marshall also powered the fusion of Soft Machine, the art rock of Jack Bruce's *Harmony Row*, and the ECM stylings of Eberhard Weber's Colours during the '70s.

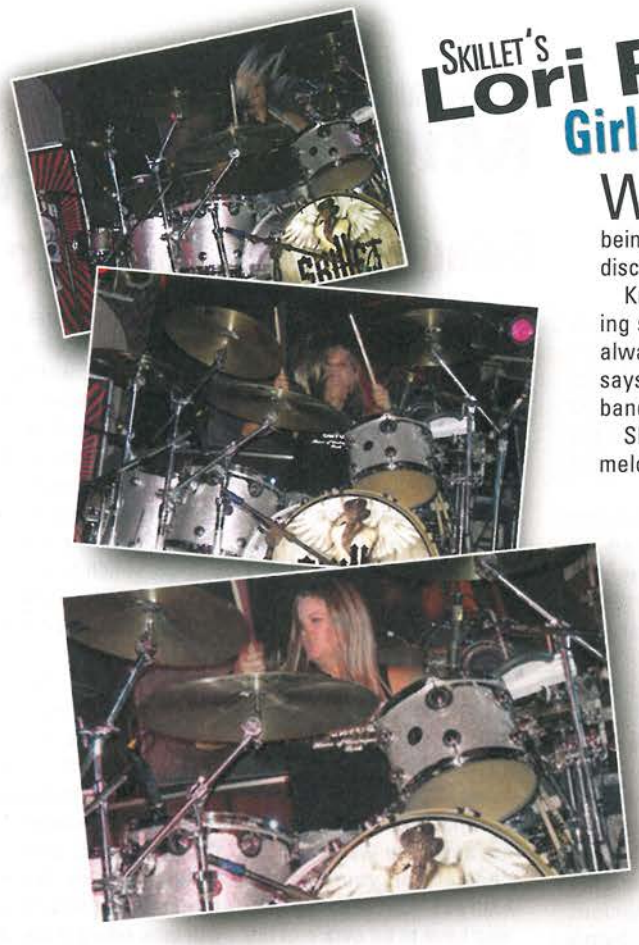
Not resting on his laurels, Marshall continues to take on new projects. *The Triangle* (ECM) is the second release by Arild Anderson's trio featuring Marshall and Greek pianist Vassilis Tsabropoulos. Meanwhile, jazz-rock fans will heed Soft Works, which teams Marshall with fellow Soft Machine veterans Allan Holdsworth, Elton Dean, and Hugh Hopper.

Regarding Arild's trio, Marshall comments, "We fit together like a glove, really. The piano trio is a rather special lineup. Having three people gives you a sort of flexibility and a strength at the same time. What seems limiting compared to a bigger group is in fact not, although dynamically you have to pull it down. But you don't have to pull it down *too* far. That's the danger, that it gets a bit precious, as far as I'm concerned. But Arild's a very strong player, and that works for me and Vassilis. I just love bass players, and I'm lucky enough to play with some great ones."

Marshall has fond memories of being in on the early jazz-rock experiments of such artists as Mike Gibbs and Nucleus. "It was all new," Marshall says. "You couldn't get a record to check out how to play it, you just had to do it." He returns to that terrain with Soft Works, but it's no nostalgia trip. "The intention is not to go over old ground," the drummer says, "although we do a couple of updated versions of old pieces that Hugh and Elton like to do."

Marshall's parting words sum up his musical philosophy: "Keep the music creative, keep movement in the music, and hope you can still get opportunities to play it. Play the music, because if it doesn't get played, it doesn't exist." **Pat Buzby**





Skillet's Lori Peters
Girls Just Wanna Have Drums

With the same intensity that linebackers smash the head of Brett Favre, Skillet's Lori Peters attacks the drums. "Being a drummer is a lot like being an athlete," Peters agrees. "It takes the same amount of dedication and discipline. You have to have endurance in both arenas."

Known as a very aggressive hitter, the Wisconsin born Peters' hair-flailing stage presence is refreshing and not all that common for the gender. "I always had to fight my way to get the good parts in high school band," she says. "They always wanted to stick the girls on the bells. Playing in a heavy band like Skillet is cool; I guess people dig seeing chick rockers."

Skillet's sound combines the aggression of Nine Inch Nails with the melody of Fuel, allowing the throaty vocals of bassist John Cooper to lead the charge. The band's latest disc, *Collide*, has put a stamp on the modern rock charts. "Over the past six years Skillet has evolved from a more industrial sound," Peters explains. "I'm really excited about *Collide* because it's like the hard rock I grew up with on MTV. This disc has heavy guitars and heavy drums and very little electronic stuff."

Gear-wise, Peters plays a five-piece DW maple kit with a mixture of DW and Pearl hardware. She uses a Craviotto snare and all Zildjian cymbals that include 14" Quick Beat hi-hats, one 17" and two 18" crashes, and a 21" medium ride. She also uses Vic Firth 3A American Classic sticks.

Stylistically, Peters leans on the early MTV influence while still having a sense for the alternative. "I play a lot of off-beat types of grooves on this disc," Peters states. "And I go away from the 2 and 4 on cuts like 'Savior' and 'Collide.' There are definitely a lot of big fills, big tom runs, and stuff like that."

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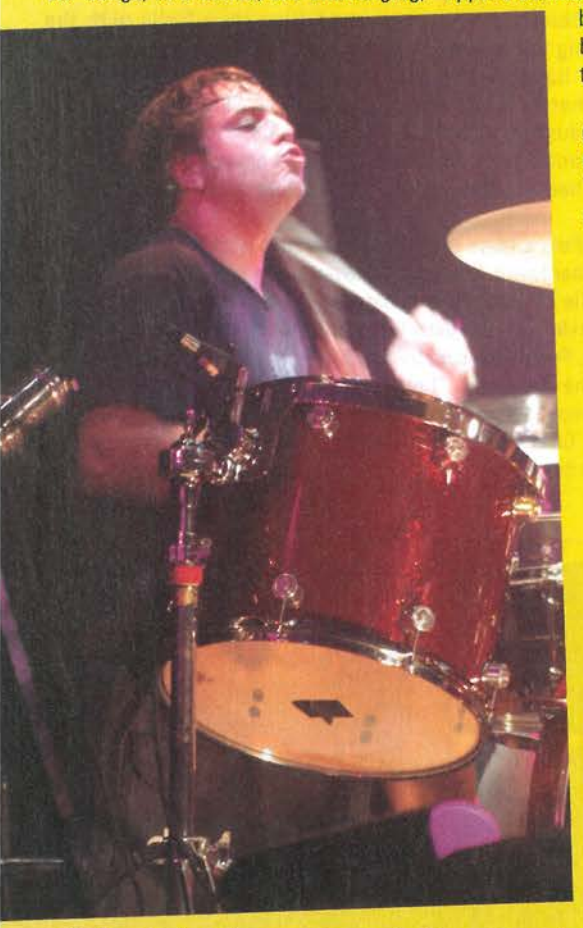
Coheed & Cambria's

Josh Eppard

Prog Mind, Groove Heart

Though Coheed & Cambria's drummer Josh Eppard grew up playing along to Sly & The Family Stone's sticksman Gregg Errico, and also cites The Cars as a musical influence, the band's progressive rock underpinnings challenge him. "All of our songs, in a sense, are challenging," Eppard admits. "That's what's fun about being in a progressive band; you can always test your limits."



At the same time, the goal for Eppard and his rhythm section mate, Mic Todd, is to keep things somewhat understated, since singer/guitarist Claudio Sanchez and guitarist Travis Stever have a tendency to play fast and furious. "When I first joined the band it was even more progressive than it is now," Eppard explains. "So Mic and I took a more conscious approach in the rhythm section to make things a little more subtle. We like to think of ourselves as one solid unit."

In Keeping Secrets Of Silent Earth: 3, the band's sophomore offering, runs the gamut from nine-minute prog-rock numbers to straight-forward driving rock songs. Take the case of "2113"—the title is a nod to critics that refer to C&C as Rush acolytes—where both sides get equal treatment. "That song is the complete opposite of subtle," Eppard jokes. "When we wrote it we were freaking out and having fun. I know it's really long, but to us it's a musical joke in a way. It goes from math-rock precision into a very straight forward, almost Police-like groove."

As for his drumset, Eppard likes to keep things simple. "I play a four-piece kit," he says. "Sometimes I feel like using an 8x10 rack tom, sometimes a 9x12, so I'll switch it up. But I always keep it a four-piece kit. I never have more than two toms. I'm not really into those humongous kits.

"I don't use double bass drums or a double pedal," he continues, "although a lot of people think I do. I would say that out of anything, I do like showing off with my feet. I've always catered to that. I believe that your feet are in charge of the groove, more so than your hands."

David John Farinella

Pleasure Club's

Michael Jerome

Balancing Creativity And Cash

Pleasure Club's Michael Jerome admits that with the release of their second studio album, *The Fugitive Kind*, the band is both excited and nervous. Why? They're releasing it independently. "That means we don't have the typical support that a major label can give you from the financial standpoint," Jerome explains. "It brings something different to the situation. It makes it even more special, important, and valuable. And it's scary, yet exhilarating. It keeps you on an emotional roller coaster, because you want to concentrate on your art and express yourself, but you also have to be aware of the financial return."

On *The Fugitive Kind*, Jerome worked with drum loops as a template. "I would play live drums around an electronic pattern," he explains, "using the loop rhythm as a template to drive an idea I had for the track. I focused on that for a few of the songs, like on 'You Want Love,' which has an electronic low-end pulse and a lot of ambience on the cymbals."

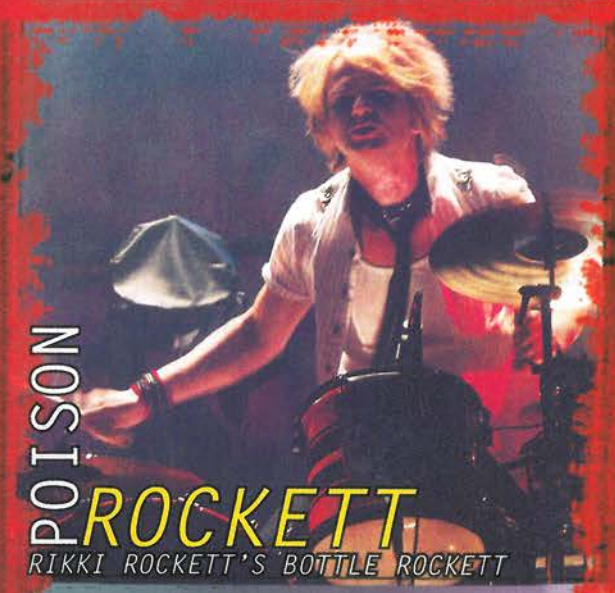
Jerome says that one of his favorite tracks on the album is "Streetwalkers Anthem." "It reminds me of 'Rock And Roll' by Gary Glitter," he relates. "It has that '60s swing thing, and it feels real slippery and slinky. I also like the way it sounds, which to me is very '70s. There's a room ambience that really adds to the track.

"I also like 'Cops And Criminals,'" Jerome continues, "because I like the groove on it and the experimentation. In the beginning of the tune, I wanted something that would grab the listener's attention. There was a rusted motorcycle gasoline tank sitting in the studio, so I told Ethan [Allen, producer] to throw a mic' up, and I rattled off some 16th notes on it. When the song kicks in, it totally grabs you."

It seems that the process of working without a label is beginning to pay off for the band, and Jerome is thrilled about that. However, he does add, "We're always aware of the main challenge to remain creative while worrying about paying the bills."

Robyn Flans

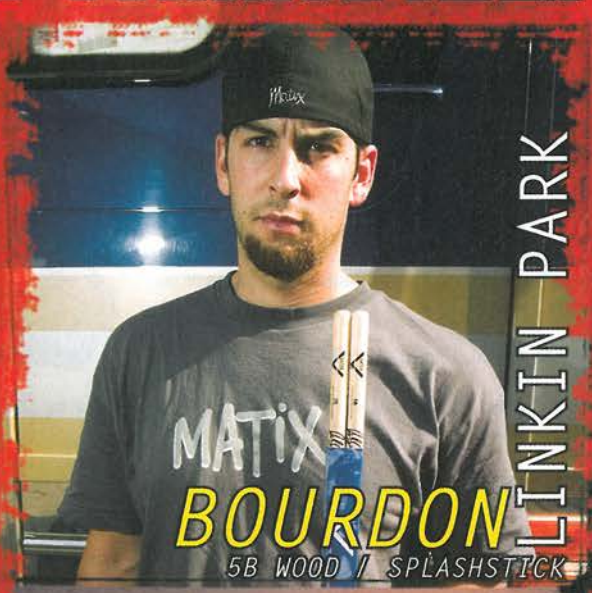
MEET VATER'S QUALITY CONTROL TEAM



POISON

ROCKETT

RIKKI ROCKETT'S BOTTLE ROCKETT



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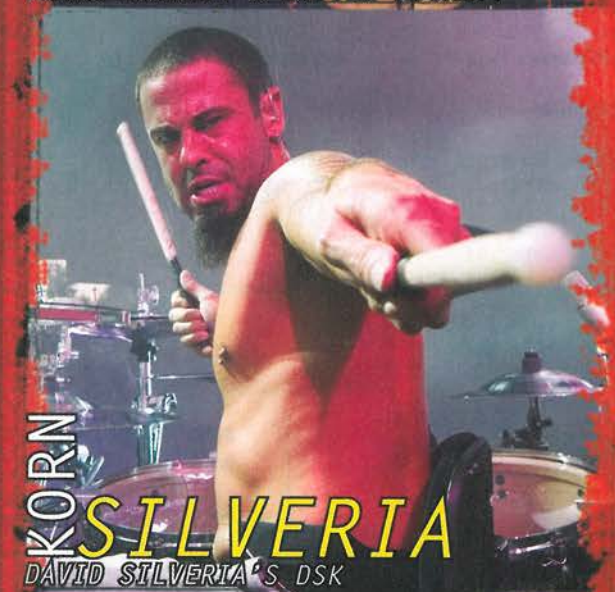

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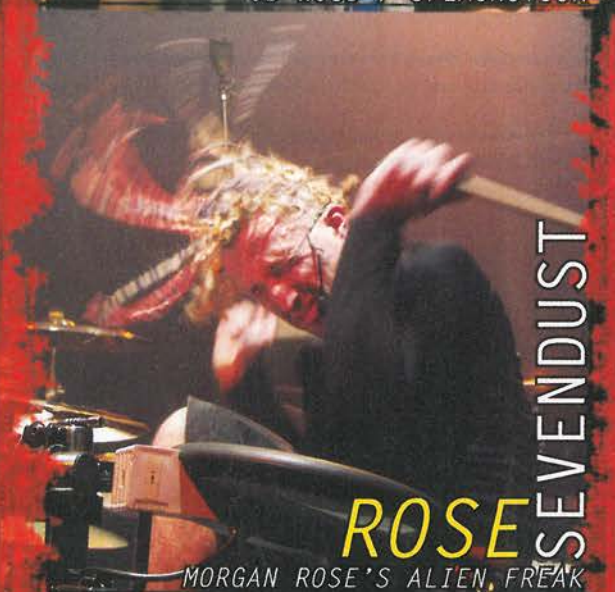

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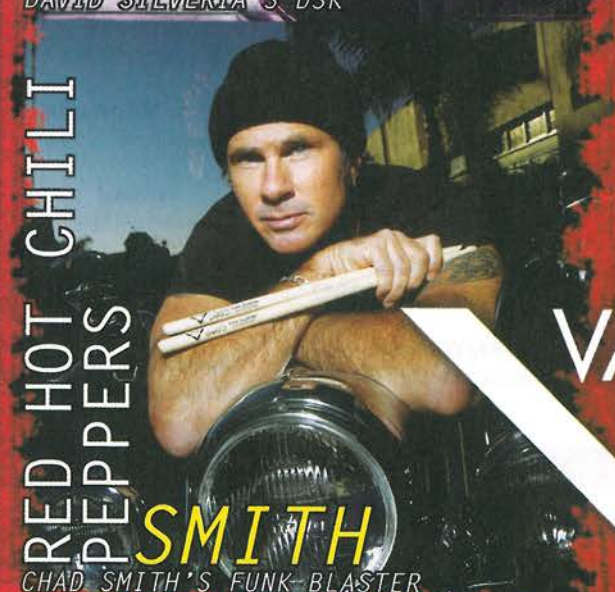

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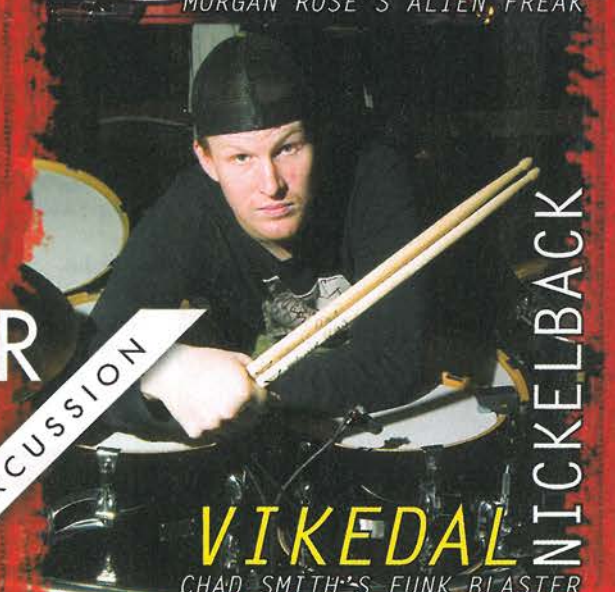

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NEWS

Chris Ralles is touring with Kenny Loggins.

Rod Morgenstein is on Jordan Rudess's new solo CD, *Rhythm Of Time*, as well as The Jelly Jam's new release, *2*.

Vinnie Colaiuta has been doing dates with Faith Hill.

Keb Mo's *Peace...Back By Popular Demand* features **Steve Ferrone** on drums and **Paulinho Da Costa** on percussion.

Dirty Arya is on Skindred's Lava Records debut, *Babylon*.

Dave Cottini is on *Sparkle In The Finish*, the new release by The Ike Reilly Assassination.

James Sefchek is on tour with Brazil.

Incubus drummer **Jose Pasillas** recently subbed for Sparta drummer **Tony Hajjar** on the Incubus/Sparta tour. (Tony had broken his wrist during the tour.) Sparta's new album, *Porcelain*, is in stores now.

Percussionist **Taku Hirano** has concluded an eighteen-month international tour with Fleetwood Mac. He's currently on tour with Bette Midler, with **Teddy Campbell** on drums.

Robert Sweet is on the recently released Blissed debut recording, *Waking Up The Dead*. The band has just returned from an overseas tour.

Kenny Aronoff, **Abe Laboriel Jr.**, and **Jeff Rothschild** are on Ashlee Simpson's *Autobiography*.

Steve Luongo, formerly with The Jon Entwistle Band, is on Torque's *103103*.

John Riley is on The Bob Mintzer Big Band's *Live At MCG*.

David Throckmorton is on The Thoth Trio's *Apropos Of Nothing*.

Jimmie Fadden is on The Nitty Gritty Dirt Band's *Welcome To Woody Creek*.

Jamey Haddad is on Nancy Wilson's *R.S.V.P.*

Paul Redmond is on Letter Kills' *The Bridge*.

Drummer **Roderick Hicks** and percussionist **Rikki Hicks** are on tour with The O'Jays.

Tim Chewning is touring with Richard Marx, who's promoting his latest CD, *My Own Best Enemy*. It feature **Steve Brewster**, **Gregg Bissonette**, **Matt Walker**, and **Matt Laug**.

Rich Mercurio is on Keri Noble's *Fearless*.

Hilary Jones has been touring with Robben Ford.

DRUM DATES This month's important events in drumming history

Gone but not forgotten: **Billy Gladstone** was born on 12/15/1892, **Tony Williams** on 12/12/45, **Cozy Powell** on 12/29/47, **Dennis Wilson** on 12/4/44. (Dennis passed away on 12/28/83.) Original Byrds drummer **Michael Clarke** passed away on 12/19/93, and jazz great **Don Lamond** passed away on 12/23/03.

On 12/15/69, John & Yoko's Plastic Ono Band (with **Alan White** on drums) make their UK debut at London's Lyceum Ballroom. Joining them on stage is Eric Clapton, George Harrison, Billy Preston, and drummers **Jim Gordon** and **Keith Moon**.

Asia (with **Carl Palmer**) wins the top pop new artist and top pop album award in *Billboard's* year-end chart roundup in December of '82.

On 12/2/00, The Smashing Pumpkins (with **Jimmy Chamberlin**) play their final show at Chicago's Cabaret Metro.

Happy Birthday!

Ed Thigpen
(brush master): 12/28/30

Dave Clark
(The Dave Clark Five): 12/15/42

Allan Schwartzberg
(session great): 12/28/42

Alex Acuña
(LA studio): 12/12/44

Bobby Colomby
(Blood, Sweat & Tears): 12/20/44

John Densmore
(The Doors):
12/1/45

Clive Bunker
(Jethro Tull): 12/12/46

Carmine Appice
(rock legend): 12/15/46

Peter Criss
(KISS): 12/27/47

Jim Bonfanti
(The Raspberries): 12/17/48

Lenny White
(fusion master): 12/19/49

Richie Morales
(Spyro Gyra, Mike Stern): 12/8/52

Buddy Williams
(*SNL*/sessions): 12/17/52

John "JR" Robinson
(studio great): 12/29/54

Sheila E
(solo artist): 12/12/57

Lars Ulrich
(Metallica): 12/26/63

Marco Minnemann
(Illegal Aliens): 12/24/70

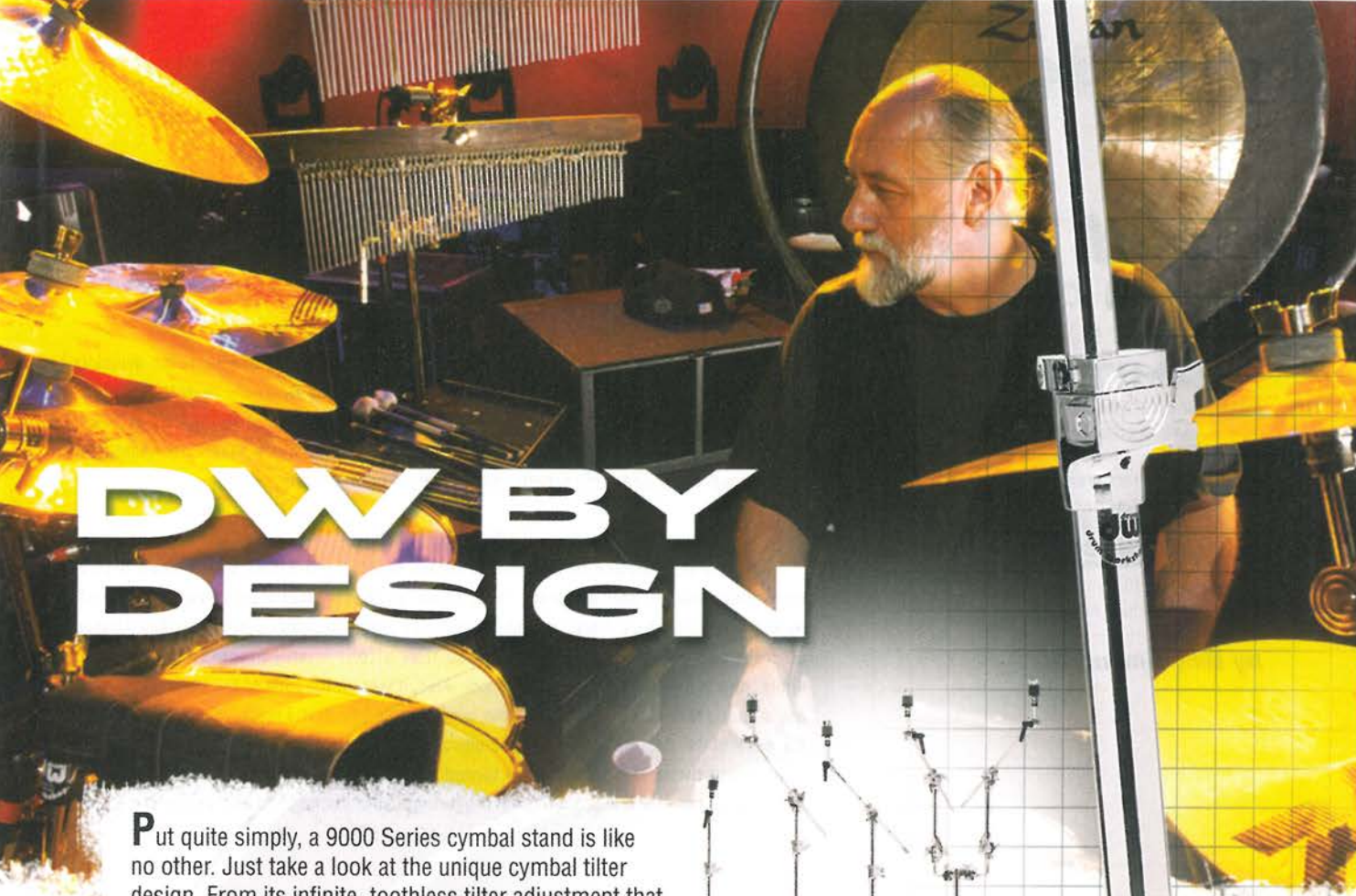
Tré Cool
(Green Day): 12/9/72

Jeremy Hummel
(Breaking Benjamin): 12/8/73

Samantha Maloney
(Hole, Mötley Crüe): 12/14/75

MD Radio

To hear some of the artists mentioned in this month's *Update*, go to MD Radio at www.moderndrummer.com.



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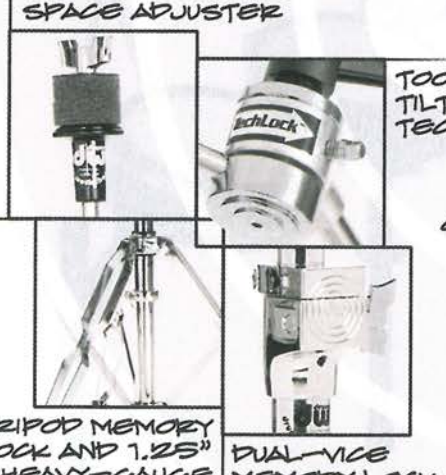
Artist: Mick Fleetwood | *Date/Time*: 09/09/03 04:26:51
Location: Culver Studios, Los Angeles | Fleetwood Mac Dress Rehearsal



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Shown above, left to right: 9710L Lightweight Straight Cymbal Stand, 9700L Lightweight Straight/Boom Cymbal Stand, 9700 Heavy-Duty Straight/Boom Cymbal Stand, 9799 Dual Cymbal Stand

dw

Roland TD-20S V-Pro Drumkit

How Real Can You Get?

HITS

close your eyes...you'll think you're on a real kit

"snare buzz" feature creates more natural kit sound

MISSES

sounds from the TD-10 cannot be transferred to the TD-20 sound module

by Billy Amendola

Just when I was sure that nothing more could be done with electronic drumkits to make them sound and feel more real, along comes Roland's updated TD-20S-BK V-Pro drumkit, advancing the reality yet again. I've played all of Roland's kits over the years, most recently the TD-10. This new model has pretty much taken everything I ever complained about under my breath, and fixed it—and then some.

Feel And Function

The natural response of the 10" PD-105BK and 12" PD-125BK mesh-head V-pads is incredibly realistic and accurate. In addition, each has dual trigger capabilities, which makes your rolls more "real" sounding, and less "machine-like" during fast fills. Unless, of course, you *want* that—in which case that effect is still available. Just turn the knob...that's the beauty of electronic kits. Also, if you hit the rims of the pads, they can create a *sound* like metal rims—but again, only if you'd like that. I really dug being able to turn the click of the rims on and off, especially on the snare. If I wanted to play a side-stick, the sound was there; if I didn't, I just turned it off. That way, I could play natural-feeling rimshots on the snare without the rim triggering a side-stick sound accidentally.

Kudos to the Roland engineers who've gotten closer to acoustic-sounding drums by applying the latest version of Roland's COSM technology to reproduce the sounds of new and vintage kits by DW, Gretsch, Ludwig, and many others. I also *love* a new feature that lets you add "snare buzz" when you play the toms. Sure, we all try to get *rid* of it on our acoustic kits. But if you play a fill around the toms on an electronic kit, the way those toms stand out from what should be the ambient sound of the kit (including snare buzz) makes them sound unnatural. This new feature puts that natural quality back into the overall kit sound.

Like previous Roland kits, you can fine-tune the sound of your drums by literally dialing in the ambience of the room, mic' placement, drumhead selection and tension, and shell depth. The TD-20S adds the ability to select different types of bass drum beaters, including wood, felt, and plastic.

The CY-14 C (crash) and CY-15 R (ride) cymbals respond precisely and accurately, with three-way triggering on the ride. And now the "size" of the cymbal can be changed instantly. With just a turn of a knob you can go from a 1" ride to a 40" ride. You can even add various sizzle effects. The pads also feature realistic choking capability.

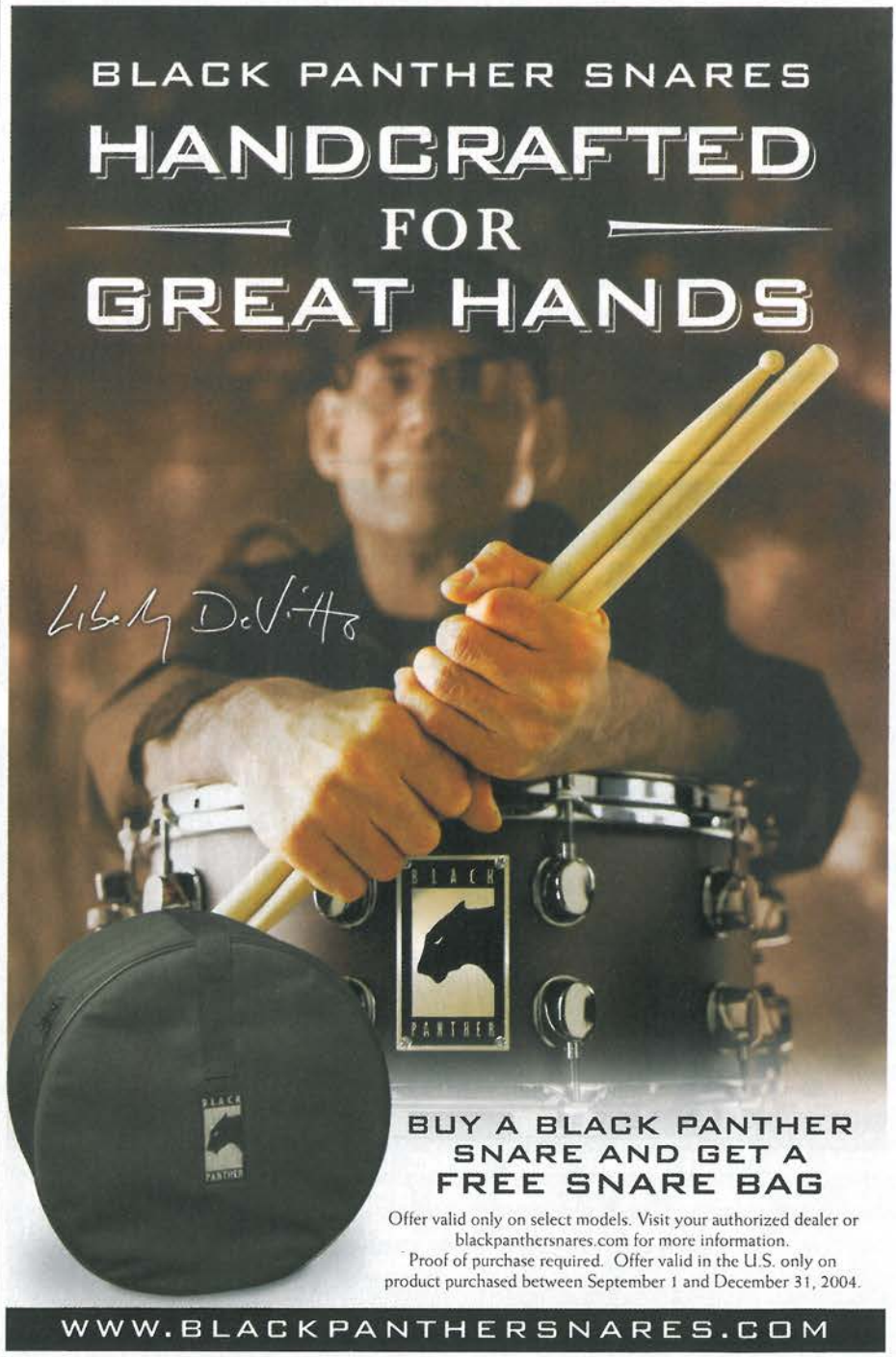
One gripe I used to have with the older-version V-Drums was the factory pre-set of the assigned cymbal to trigger play-along tracks. I'd get into my groove, forget that my cymbal wasn't a "crash" anymore, accidentally hit it, and...boom, no more sequencer. Not anymore. Roland has moved the triggers to the top of the pad and the bell, so I can still use the pad as a crash. Simple, but *very* effective.

One of the newest features on the TD-20S is the V-12 hi-hat, which now mounts two pads on any acoustic hi-hat stand. Personally, I got used to playing the single-pad hi-hat on the TD-10, and I always thought it was pretty accurate. So I'm not as excited about the V-12 as someone who's never played an electronic hi-hat might be. I think the advantage of having two pads on a real hi-hat stand is mostly psychological. It just seems more natural. But I have to admit that if you're playing the V-12 as your first encounter with an electronic hi-hat, you'll definitely be amazed at its response. You do have to go into the brain and tweak the hats to get them just right, but once you do, it couldn't be more real. Roland's Web site offers an excellent video demo on the set-up and calibration of the hats for just that purpose.

All These Sounds...

The sound module for the TD-20S has over 500 drum sounds and 262 backing instruments, along with a five-part sequencer. (To hear some of those sounds, go to www.moderndrummer.com.) It also features fifteen dual-trigger inputs, ten audio (analog) outputs, and an S/PDIF digital output with eight group faders. I particularly liked the separate faders for the kick, snare, toms, and cymbals right on the front panel.

The TD-20 module also comes with a Compact Flash slot for storage, V-Link technology for triggering video clips (when using an



Edirol DV-7PR, which is sold separately), and an expansion slot for future upgrades. That last feature, by the way, is a *very* important consideration. My one disappointment in the TD-20—and not a minor one—was that I couldn't load in sounds from my TD-10. So if you have a TD-10 kit, and you're considering selling it to upgrade to the TD-20S, all the custom kits and sounds that you spent hours on will be lost.

Play And Practice

I'm pretty sure that after playing the TD-20S kit, feeling the response of the pads, and hearing the new sounds, you'll pretty quickly get over that loss we just spoke of. This kit is definitely not a toy, but it *is* a lot of fun. The backing instruments really give us drummers the opportunity to be a one-musician band. You're never in need for anyone to jam with, at any time of the day or night. Every time you sit down to play, the hours will fly by.

Besides the pure fun factor, I can't stress enough how valuable the TD-20's patterns are to play along with as a practice tool. Just about every feel is included. And while the price for this baby is not insignificant, it sure beats having to pay for studio time and musicians to perform with.

Support System

The MDS-20BK drum rack for the TD-20S has been totally redesigned, with cast aluminum T-fittings, quick-release cam levers, and an attractive black finish. A very neat feature (literally) is that all the cables are mounted inside the stand tubing, keeping them tangle-free and out of sight.

Conclusion

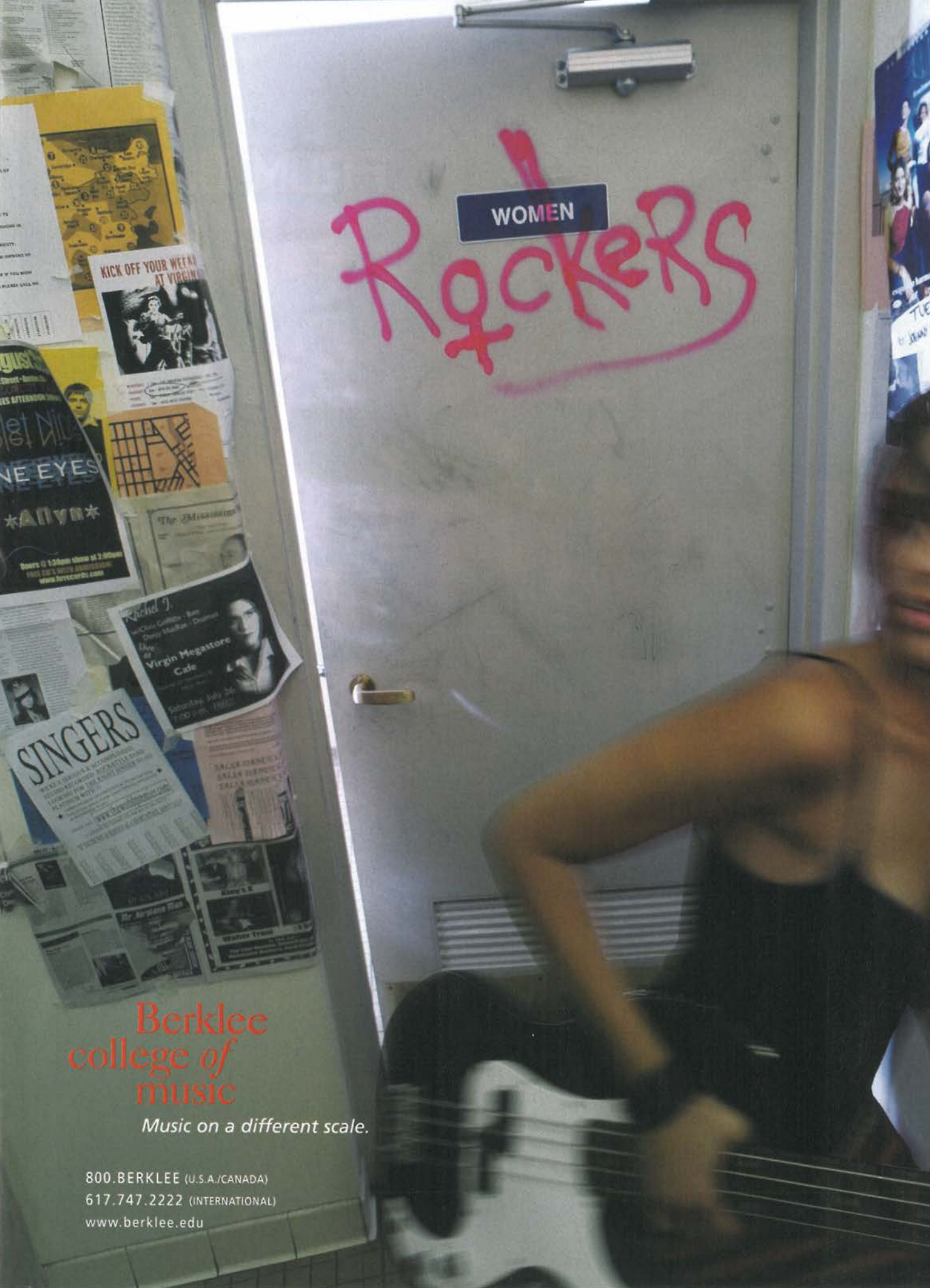
If you've been thinking about finally checking out an electronic kit, now is the time. Quite simply, the new TD-20S V-Pro drumkit will provide you with the most natural response and sensitivity you're likely to find from any electronic drumkit on the market. I'm confident that after trying it out, even the most skeptical acoustic drumset player will admit, "Hey, this really *does* feel and sound like acoustic drums." And when you factor in all the things that a V-Drum kit can do that acoustic drums can't, its appeal becomes even greater. Check it out.

THE NUMBERS

TD-20S-BK.....**$6,495**

Includes TD-20 sound module, two PD-105BK 10" pads, three PD-125BK 12" pads, one kick pad, two CY-14 C cymbal pads, one CY-15 R cymbal pad, V-12 hi-hat pads, MDS-20BK drum rack, and cymbal boom arms. Bass drum pedal, hi-hat stand, and snare stand are not included.

(800) 386-7575, www.rolandus.com.



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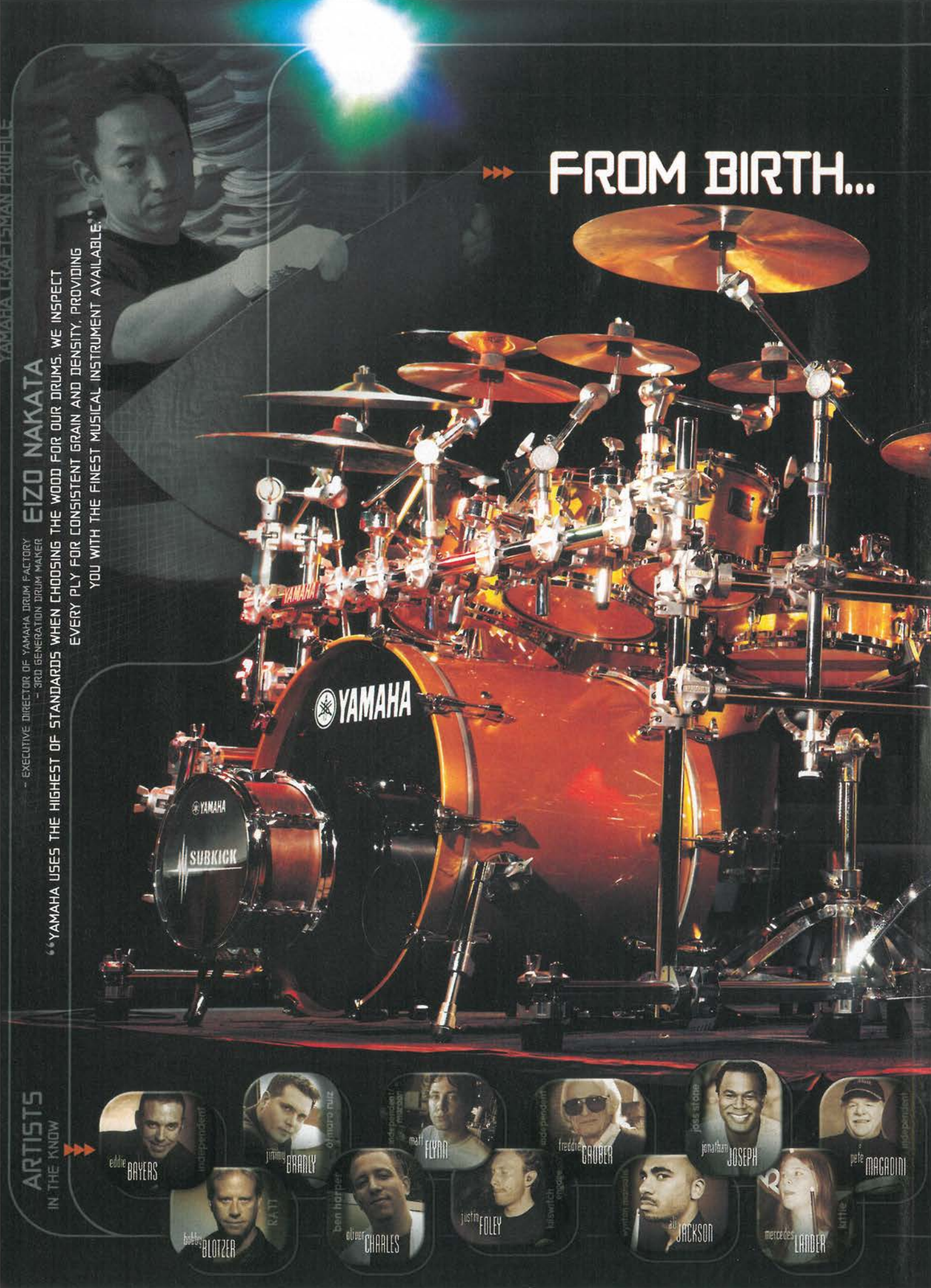
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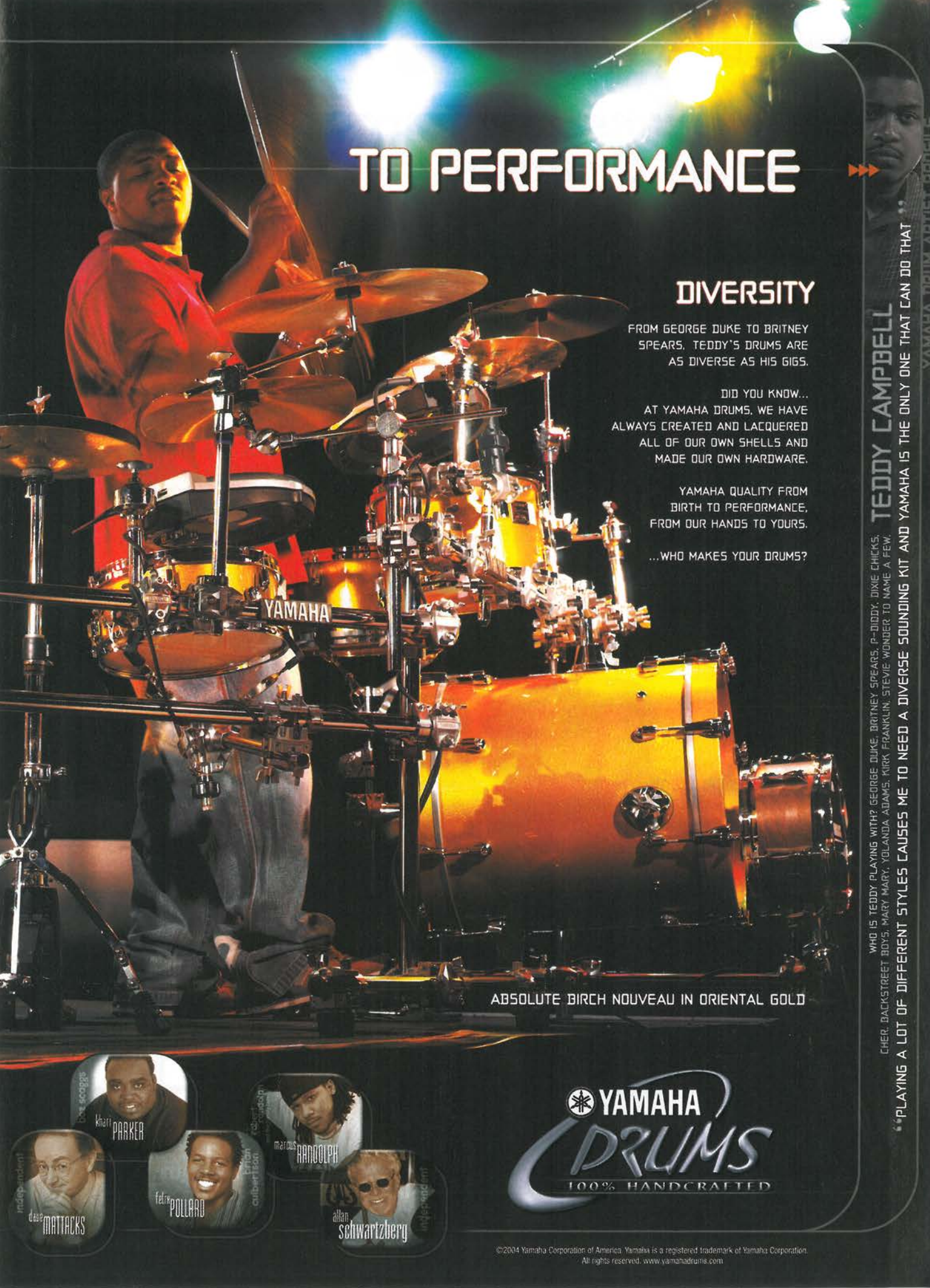

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Pacific Drums And Percussion MX Series Drumset

More Maple For The Money

HITS

100% maple construction

very affordable

nice matte finish

comes with all necessary hardware

MISSES

drumheads do not complement the drums as they should

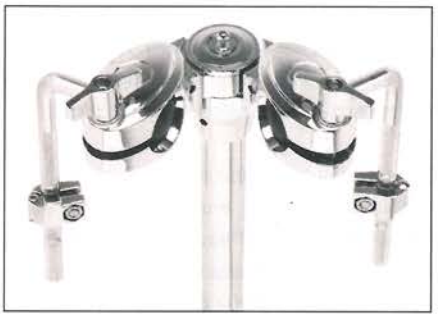
drumkey needed for three adjustment points

by Kevin D. Osborne

Well-constructed, good-sounding drums that are affordable can be a challenge to find. Part of that is due to material cost. Maple is popularly considered the wood of choice for most drum production. But the cost of maple, as well as the additional labor and finishing that goes into making maple drums, pushes the price to levels that are often beyond the means of the average consumer. As a result, many entry- and mid-level drumsets are made using woods other than maple.

Recently, however, some companies have been finding ways to produce maple drums at prices that make them more accessible to the drumming public. One such company is Drum Workshop, with their Pacific Drums And Percussion (PDP) line.

Following on the heels of their 8-ply maple LX (lacquer finished) and CX (covered) drumset series, Pacific's latest addition is the MX series. Made at the company's facility in Ensenada, Mexico, MX drums feature a hand-applied matte finish available in Deep Red and Sea Blue colors. The five-piece standard configuration includes 8x10, 9x12, and 12x14 suspended toms, an 18x22 kick, and a matching 5x14 snare. Add-on toms are available in 8" and 16" sizes.



The sets come with Pacific's 8.1 hardware pack, which includes an SP400 single bass pedal, an SS800 snare stand, a CS800 straight cymbal stand, a CB800 straight/boom cymbal stand, and an HH800 hi-hat stand. The bass drums come equipped with a muffling pillow and matching wood hoops.

Construction And Features

Our review set featured the Deep Red finish. The matte finish was smooth and consistent, and the insides of the drums were also clean and smooth. A sporty new chrome-embossed badge is attached to each drum. The oval-shaped lugs are very solid and use a pliable rubber insulating gasket where they contact the shell.

As a new upgrade, the toms came equipped with pro-style (STM) suspension tom mounts. These mounts encircle the lugs, securing the drum while allowing it to fully resonate. Another nice feature is the use of DW's fine-threaded tension rods, which allow for better incremental tuning of the drum.

I like the pillow for the bass drum. It can be mounted inside the drum with hook-and-loop fastener strips that attach to the shell. Or, if you've cut a hole in the front bass drum head, the pillow can easily be moved into whatever position you want, whenever you want to adjust the sound of the bass drum.

The bass drum claws were also nice. Instead of being hollow stamped pieces, the claws are formed with half of their entire length solid and drilled to receive and guide the tension rod to the lug. This helps to hold the tension rod in place and line it up when changing heads. The claws also have felt applied to their insides to protect the wooden bass drum hoop.

The bearing edges on all the drums were sharp, consistent, and smooth. The outside cut is shallow (2 plies wide), while the inside edge is deeper and cuts across six of the eight plies. Speaking of plies, three maple plywood sheets are used to create the 8-ply shell. A 2-ply sheet is sandwiched between two 3-ply sheets and then heat-molded to form the drumshell. The seams are staggered, and the grain is offset for strength. These innovative processes help to keep costs down while still delivering a quality product.

The fit & finish of all our review drums was excellent. Removing and replacing heads and rims proved very easy. I've encountered some mid-level drums that presented a bit of a struggle to get the rim back onto the drum, and to line the holes up with the lugs. Not so with the PDP drums.

Hardware

The hardware that came with our review kit was solid and attractive. The boom cymbal stand, which does double duty holding a cymbal and the 12x14 suspended tom, is a two-piece affair with a disappearing boom rod. Both the boom and the straight cymbal stand are sturdy, yet they're lighter in weight than most of the cymbal stands I have. That's a nice plus if you're going to be carting them about.

The sturdy snare stand is equipped with a height memory lock. The adjusting knob for the basket is an oversized knurled plastic piece that's easy to find and turn. The snare angle adjustment utilizes a fine-geared mechanism for adjustments in small increments, allowing the drummer to angle the snare to the most comfortable and exact position desired.

The hi-hat delivers smooth operation and very nice splash functionality. The legs can be rotated for positioning needs, and a memory lock is included. My only complaint here is the spring adjustment. You need a drumkey to loosen the screw. After sliding the spring adjuster up, you have to hold it in place while you tighten the screw again with the key. This operation is generally performed while you're uncomfortably bent over in between the hi-hat and the snare. A wing nut would be handier to work with.

In fact, there are three places on the MX kit where drumkey screws are used instead of wingnuts: the hi-hat, the bass drum pedal, and the swivel adjustment on the tom mounts. There may be an engineering reason for these drumkey screws, but from a drummer's perspective they're an inconvenience. This is particularly aggravating since the wing nuts that *are* used on the kit are all very nicely sized and easy on the fingers.

The tom mounts are solid, with plenty of positioning options. There is also a tom mount/clamp that attaches to the boom stand for the larger third tom. In this instance, nice large wing nuts that are easy to reach and tighten are employed.

The bass drum pedal is a very serviceable unit with a single-chain drive, a side-mounted clamp screw (you need your drumkey here), and

built-in spurs. It too produced smooth movement and response. The action was quick enough for me to easily execute double beats on the bass drum.

A quick check through a drum retail catalog reveals that all of the PDP hardware is very competitively priced. That means that adding extra cymbal stands won't break your budget.

Drumkit Sound

We played the MX drums in two different rooms in the house, then took them out to a band practice. In all three locations the kit got high marks for attack and punch, along with stick and head response. There need be no concern about them being heard or producing a clear, clean sound when struck. But before I discuss the sound of the individual drums, I'd like to say something about drumheads.

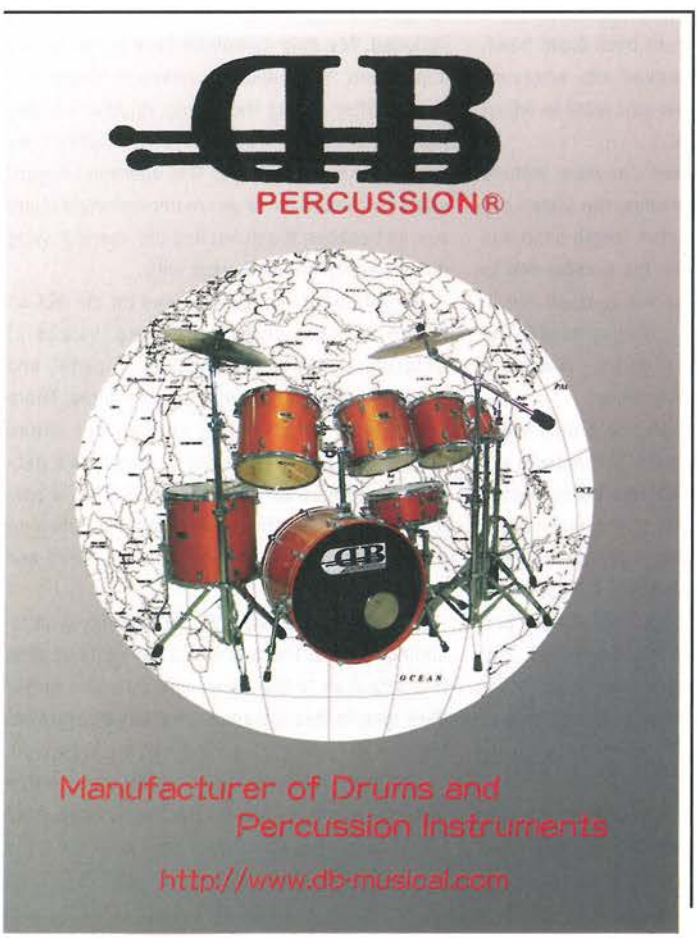
Head Case

In a valiant effort to keep costs down, the MX kit features heads made overseas. While the sounds produced from the heads on the snare drum are fine, the toms and bass drum are another story. With the original heads the drums have great attack and punch, but they lack depth.

When I swapped heads on one of the mounted toms, using a DW Coated Clear batter head and a quality resonant head, the result was dramatic. The tonality immediately increased in depth and quality. It was like a different drum. The bass drum was just as obvious. The substitution of quality heads eliminated hollowness while producing more punch and depth. Plus I could position the pillow a little differently to get either open power or muffled *ooomph*.

In fairness to Pacific Drums, I'm sure this is a difficult call to make, since equipping the drums with higher-quality heads would likely raise the cost of production. But the difference in sound was significant to my ears.

Despite the issue of head selection, the maple shells and quality construction contribute greatly to the basically good sound generated by the MX toms and bass drum. They also provide the potential for an even better sound with replacement heads.



Drum By Drum

The snare tuned up very nicely and responded well to cranking up the heads. This little maple drum produces a crisp yet woody sound with good snare response. With just enough ring to give it some sonic distance but not inhibit the woody quality of the drum, the snare is easily heard and produces a very pleasant sound. The new side-to-side snare throw-off has a rubber-coated lever, which quiets any contact noise when the snares are moved from "off" to "on."

The toms had a pronounced pitch differentiation and were very complementary to each other. When sticking my way around the toms I could clearly hear and enjoy the different pitches of each drum, without one being too close in pitch to the next. The F.A.S.T. sizes are probably responsible for some of this, along with the maple construction.

The MX set comes with an 18x22 bass drum. For someone who grew up with 14"-deep bass drums, 18" is impressive. I know that it's a standard size these days, but I still think it's a lot of drum to get with a kit in this price range. And the sound certainly benefits; the drum has a presence to match its physical dimensions.

Wrap-Up

Pacific's MX series drumset fills a niche for the aspiring or accomplished budget-minded drummer who wants a good-looking, nice-sounding, all-maple drumset. It's affordable and well built, with many features found on more expensive kits. You may need to spend an extra few bucks on better heads, but the results should more than justify that added investment.

THE NUMBERS

Configuration: 8x10, 9x12, and 12x14 suspended toms, 18x22 kick, and matching 5x14 snare, with 8.1 hardware pack including an SP400 single bass pedal, an SS800 snare stand, a CS800 straight cymbal stand, a CB800 straight/boom cymbal stand, and an HH800 hi-hat stand. Bass drum is equipped with a muffling pillow and matching wood hoops. Available add-on drums include 18x22 bass drums ($680), 7x8 rack toms ($188), and 14x16 floor toms ($310).

List price: **$1,581**

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HITS

hand-made quality

excellent attention to detail

Golden Legend cymbals have more control than some "rock" models

MISSES

Millennium ride could use a slightly higher bell

by Russ Barbone

As you might deduce from their name, the Turkish Cymbal Company is one of a few small manufacturers still making cymbals in Istanbul, Turkey. Those cymbals are made using old-world methods, such as wood-fired ovens, hand hammering, and hand lathing. But the manufacturers are constantly striving to meet contemporary musical needs. We received two different new models for evaluation: the Millennium series and the Golden Legend series.

The Millenniums are aimed at jazz, fusion, and small-venue situations. The Golden Legends are a heavier series intended for rock, bigger clubs, or just cutting through an under-miked gig. Both series include hi-hats that feature slightly heavier-weight bottom cymbals. For the purpose of our review, we tested the same sizes in each series: 14" hi-hats, a 16" crash, and a 20" ride.

General Characteristics

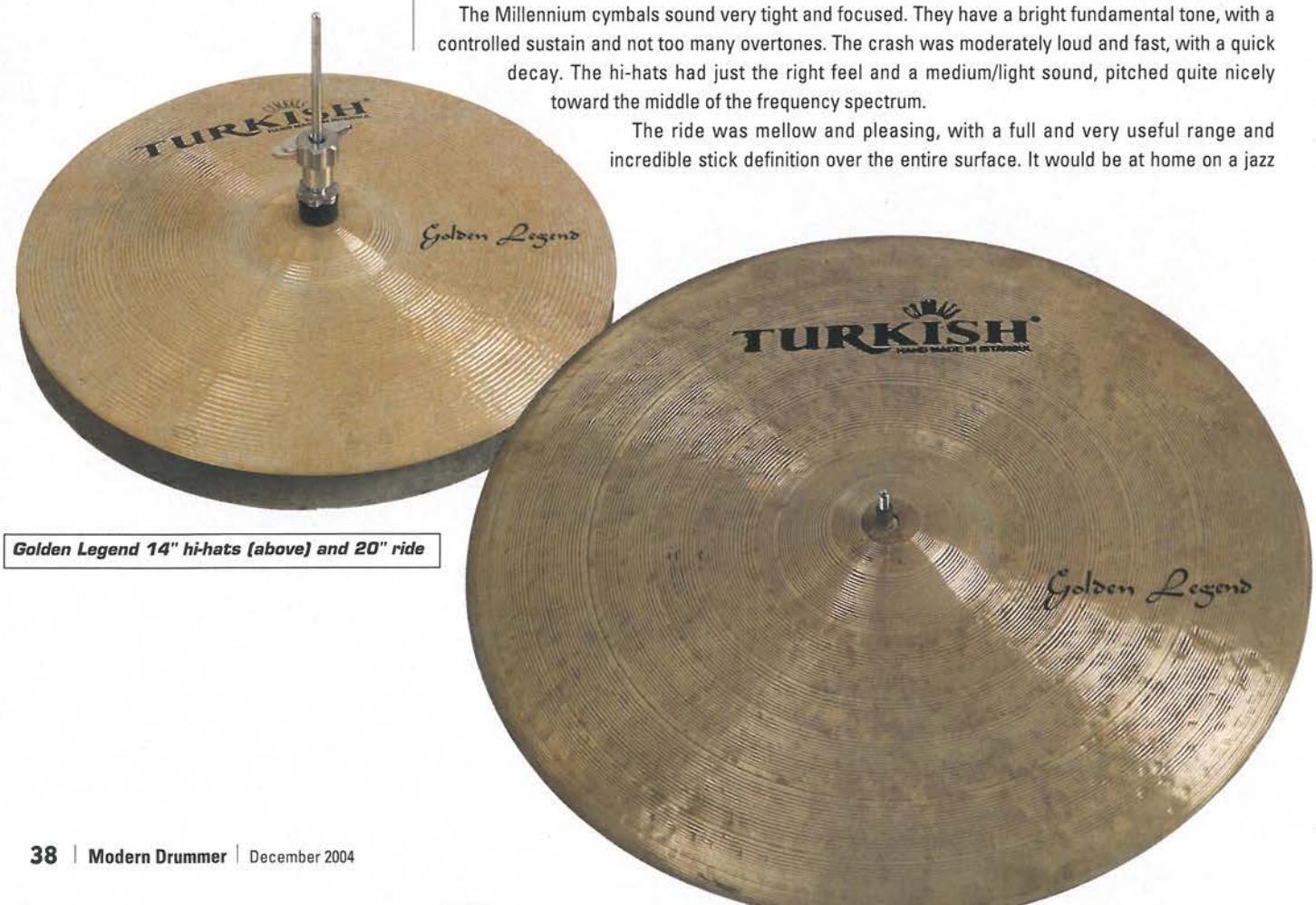
Upon close examination, one gets the feeling these cymbals are very well made. Quality jumps out at you. The Millennium models are finished with a bright polished surface on their tops and bottoms. The lathing on the bell is tight and concentric, then moves to an almost double spacing down the entire cambered surface to the edge of the cymbal.

The Golden Legends go through an acid etching process after casting. Then they're lathed on their tops, which produces a very striking visual effect of alternating shiny/dull closely spaced rings that radiate from the bell outward. The bottoms are left unlathed, showing the metal casting, which is hand-hammered in its natural beauty.

Sound

The Millennium cymbals sound very tight and focused. They have a bright fundamental tone, with a controlled sustain and not too many overtones. The crash was moderately loud and fast, with a quick decay. The hi-hats had just the right feel and a medium/light sound, pitched quite nicely toward the middle of the frequency spectrum.

The ride was mellow and pleasing, with a full and very useful range and incredible stick definition over the entire surface. It would be at home on a jazz



Golden Legend 14" hi-hats (above) and 20" ride

16" Millennium crash

gig, in smaller clubs, or as a great studio tool. Want to cut through a noisy club? Ride down toward the edge for more sustain. Want to stand out over a loud piano? Play up toward the bell for more ping.

Speaking of the bell, the one on the Millennium ride is lower in profile than the bell on most 20" rides. This tends to produce a sound that leans more toward that of a flat ride. My personal preference would be a bell with a slightly higher profile, but this may not be a concern for other drummers.

The heavier weight of the Golden Legend models makes them louder overall than the Millenniums. Usually a cymbal that's considered a "rock" model will ring substantially, especially in larger sizes. Not so with the Golden Legends. The crash was loud and explosive, but with a fast, controlled decay. The acid etching and top-only lathing produced a loud, dry-sounding initial stick response that cut through. But the after-shock was diminished, without a lot of shimmer or sustain—again likely due to the unlathed bottom sides of the cymbals.

The hi-hats were loud without being overbearing. The ride cymbal was well controlled and pitched just right. Aside from their use on stage, you might want to consider Golden Legends for a good rock recording setup.

Bag 'Em

The cymbal sets were shipped to *MD* in Turkish's cymbal bag. It will hold cymbals up to 22", with enough room for an entire normal gig's worth of cymbals. It's made out of sturdy nylon and features a double-stitched handle, a carrying strap with metal "O"-ring attachment points, and two outer pockets. One pocket measures 20"x4" and is intended for sticks, brushes, and mallets. The other pocket measures 5"x3" and is good for storing drumkeys and other small tools.

Conclusion

Turkish may be a small manufacturer, but they're no slouches when it comes to product development. The Millennium and Golden Legend series are both worthy of your attention. Which of the two would be best for you depends solely on your musical application. They are imported, hand-made cymbals, so they're not cheap. But they offer excellent manufacturing quality, backed up by a one-year warranty on all cymbals except splashes. More importantly, they offer distinctive musical character.

THE NUMBERS

Millennium Series

14" hi-hats	$549
16" crash	$269
20" ride	$539

Golden Legend Series

14" hi-hats	$599
16" crash	$339
20" ride	$589
22" cymbal bag	$ 69

(619) 846-6577, statuscymbalfranc@sbcglobal.net, www.turkishcymbals.com.

Millennium 20" riveted ride (left) and 14" hi-hats

Brady Drums Be-Bop Kit

Mighty Mite

HITS

gorgeous hand-made Australian hardwood shells

snare is versatile

bass drum is a little cannon

hardware is worth its extra weight

MISSES

drums are pricey

12" rack tom seems too large for compact "jazz" configuration

by Robin Tolleson

You know how when you pick up a piece of electronic gear, and it's really heavy and just feels solid...somehow you feel like you're getting your money's worth? That's kind of what Brady Drums are like. Even the small drums that comprise their Be-Bop kit take a little muscle to pack around. But to the discriminating player, the exotic look and top-end tone of the drums could overshadow the weight—and the weighty price tag.

The Brady Drum Company, located in Armadale in Western Australia, makes its own ply, solid wood, and block shells. For their ply drums, Brady uses select grades of West Australian hardwoods such as jarrah and marri. On their block-shell snares they also use sheoak, wandoo, gimlet, and goldfields blackbutt, because of different musical properties in the wood. Solid wood snares made of jarrah or wandoo are available by special order only.

Hard Boppin'

The Be-Bop kit we were sent for review is a hand-made marri ply set, with a beautiful gloss finish. These drums are a sight, with the unusual grain patterns in the wood—honey-colored, with splashes of gray and black—showcased in protective lacquer. Marri is found in the wild forests of southwest Australia, and is extremely hard and durable. Brady uses a dry-mold system, and presses the plies in a straight-grain method (with all the grain running in the same horizontal direction around the drumshell) rather than cross-laminating the plies. Brady claims that this method gives the drums a "solid wood sound." I can't argue with that claim.

5½x14 marri ply snare drum

The drums aren't heavy because of their shells. The rack tom, for instance, has eight thin plies. The weight comes from the 2.3-mm triple-flanged steel hoops, and from the on-shell hardware. According to the company, "The unique sound qualities of our drums is produced best with the use of steel hoops." Once again, I can't argue the point, because the combination works.

Brady's streamlined, efficient lug casings are connected on this kit by steel tubes running the length of the shell, contributing to a solid feel and sound. They also give the kit a classy, retro look. A rubber washer separates the shell from each piece of hardware that comes in contact with it.

Sonic Boom

The 14x18 bass drum is powerful yet tuneful, producing a warm, open sound. This drum has plenty of punch, and can be played with jazz, rock, or funk in mind. The bass drum legs are thick and strong. Hand-made bass drums up to 20" in depth are also available.

The 14x14 floor tom had the heart and soul of a much bigger drum. It was capable of booming out some serious low end, though it could also be played softly. The tone was clean and warm, never too high or boingy.

Since our review kit was called a Be-Bop model, and considering the small size of the other drums, I found myself wishing that the rack tom was an 11" or even a 10" rather than the 8x12 that was sent. It's not that the 12" tom sounded bad. On the contrary, it sounded very good—clear and true. But to my ear, the fundamental tone of the rack tom on this particular kit could stand to be a little higher than this one, relative to the other drums. That would be easy enough to achieve, since Brady offers custom tom sizes in almost any diameter, and in any depth up to the same dimension as the diameter.

Our review kit technically does not include a snare drum. Snares are sold separately. The snare that we tested featured a 5½x14 marri ply shell. It sounded very crisp and articulate, yet rimshots were full and warm. This is a versatile drum—sensitive enough to work in a demanding orchestral section, and earthy enough for funk or jazz playing.

Drum Hardware

Brady doesn't sell stands, but the hardware on their drums is top-notch. The snare drum features a clear version of the Nickel Drumworks strainer, which I find to be a model of simplicity and strength. The rack toms feature an isolation mounting system and memory locks. The floor tom legs come with thick rubber tips for a firm grip to the ground. The leg mounts on the drum are heavyweight quality, and they feature finger grips that are easy to tighten and loosen—very drummer-friendly.

Conclusion

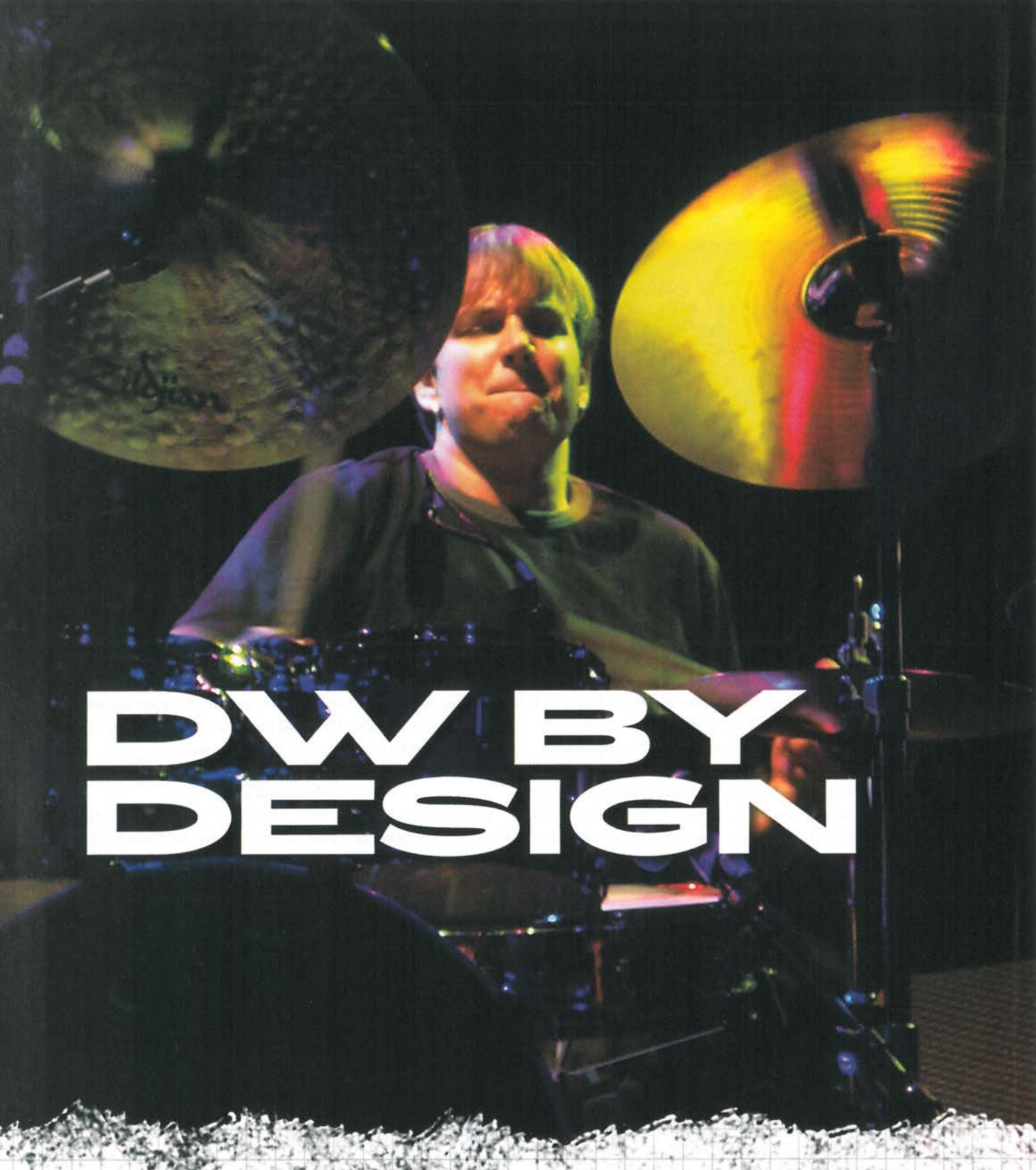
The adage that "you get what you pay for" generally proves true. Well, with a Brady kit you're paying for hand-made quality, rare materials, distinctive appearance, excellent design, and terrific sound. You're also paying for import fees from halfway around the world. It all adds up, I admit. But how much is uniqueness worth?

THE NUMBERS

Marri Ply Be-Bop Kit **$4,900**
Includes 8x12 and 14x14 toms with mounting hardware and legs, and a 14x18 bass drum with spurs. Finished in clear gloss. Available in satin finish at $4,150.

Marri Ply 5½x14 Snare Drum, with gloss finish **$1,140**
Available in satin finish at $990.

(011) 61-8-9497 2212, www.bradydrums.com.au.



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Date/Time. 09/20/03 09:21:35
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— KEITH CARLOCK

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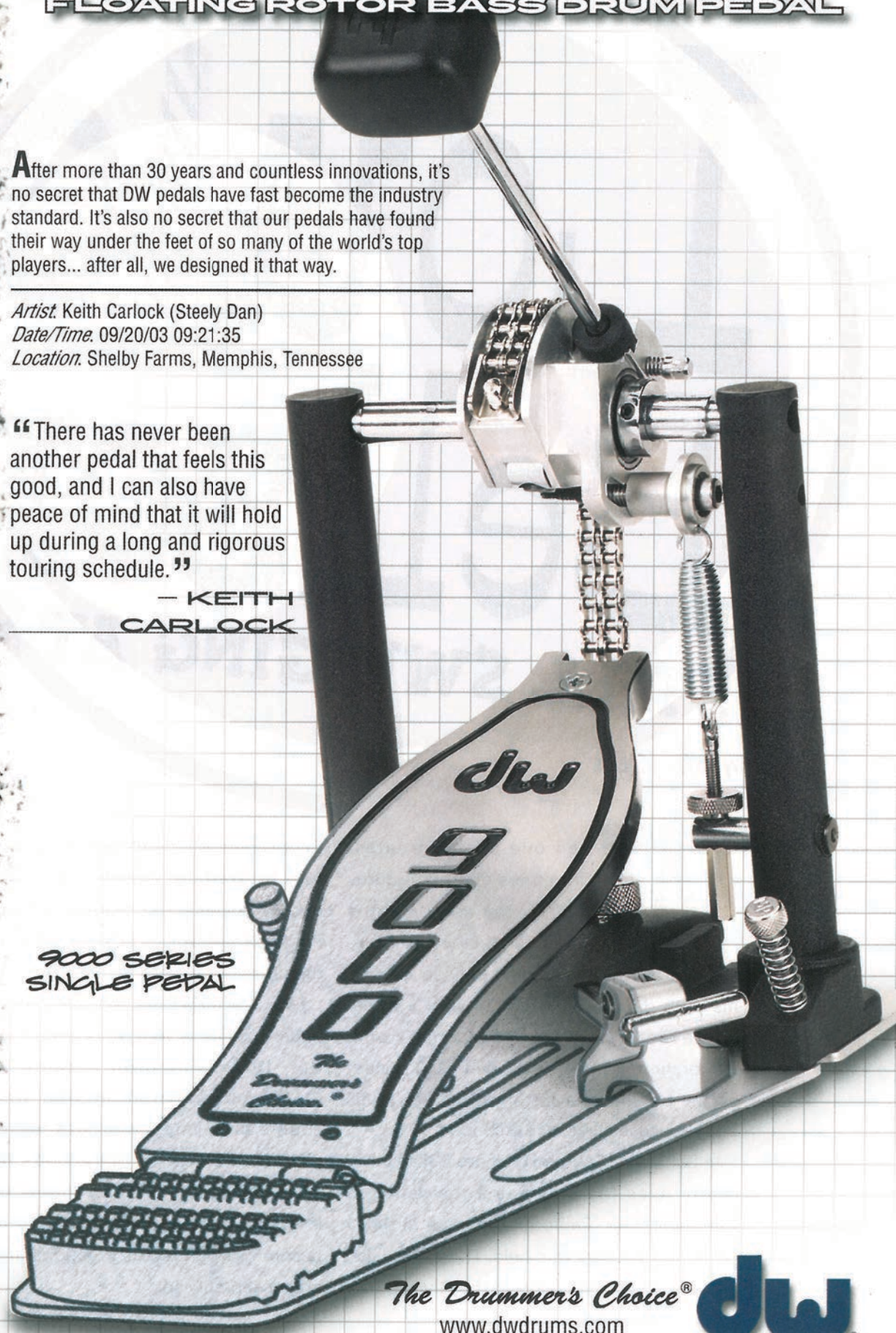

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Louie Bellson

STILL SWINGING AT 80

by Robyn Flans

When one of the greatest drummers of all time turns eighty, the celebrations continue all over the country—and for *months*. Louie Bellson marked his birth date of July 6, 1924 with a three-day event called the "Welcome Home Celebration" in Rock Falls, Illinois. It included the placing of a historical marker at his birth house, a clinic, and a concert.

In San Jose, California, where Bellson currently lives (he also has a residence in Sherman Oaks, California), a huge birthday party and concert was held. There was also an exhibit and reception at the River Music Experience Museum in Davenport, Iowa. And in Sterling, Illinois there's a tribute exhibit to Louie that includes the display of the 2003 postal cancellation stamp bearing the drummer's name and image.

Let's not forget the fact that Bellson's legendary status is well-represented as part of the Duke Ellington Exhibit at the Smithsonian Institution. And, of course, Louie's hand impression has been forever placed in cement on Hollywood's RockWalk of Fame. Taken in total, this is quite an impressive tribute to a drummer who has become recognized as a national treasure—and deservedly so.

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What an amazing career Louie Bellson has had so far. He began professionally at the tender age of seventeen with Benny Goodman, and early in his career went on to work with such masters as Tommy Dorsey, Duke Ellington, and Harry James. In the mid-'50s, Louie served as drummer and musical director for the late African-American vocalist, actress, and UN ambassador Pearl Bailey, who he married during a time of extreme racial tension.

Many drummers may not be aware of Bellson's success as a composer. He has written or arranged over a thousand pieces. And, of course, Louie's mark on drumming is deep. Besides his great technique and always-musical approach to the drums, Louie is responsible for designing the first double bass drum setup and popularizing its use, pioneering a new approach to drumming.

As for recorded output, Bellson's discography includes more than two hundred albums with the true greats of the jazz era—Duke Ellington, Count Basie, Dizzy Gillespie, Benny Goodman, Tommy Dorsey, Harry James, Woody Herman, Louie Armstrong, and Lionel Hampton, as well as legendary vocalists Mel Tormé, Sammy Davis Jr., Sarah Vaughan, Ella Fitzgerald, and Tony Bennett. Louie has done so much in his life—as musician, performer, composer, arranger, and educator—that it's hard to think of any other artist who has come anywhere *close* to his vast achievements.

Bellson's wife of twelve years, Francine, has decorated the walls of their Sherman Oaks home to pay tribute to her husband's career and contribution to the world. Photos with great artists, letters from presidents, and posters of some of his notable performances through the years give just a glimpse of a life dedicated to creating and playing music. It was among these tokens of a rare musical life that *MD* sat down with the master.

MD: Please talk about some of your favorite recordings that you played on.
Louie: Duke Ellington, "Skin Deep" and "The Hawk Talks." For me, to have Duke look at me and say, "You're a composer as well as a drummer," was amazing. He had to ask me several times to bring music in, because when I joined that band there were two geniuses writing for it—Duke and

Alex Solca

Billy Strayhorn. What was I doing bringing in *my* music? Finally, Juan Tizol said, "Bring the music in," and Duke said again, "Bring the music in." I said, "Well, I'd better or I might lose my gig."

I brought in those pieces and Duke recorded them right off the bat. Max Roach told me a long time ago that he idolized Duke and said how fortunate I was that he played my music. I said, "Max, I *still* can't get over it." A lot of drummers would give their right hand—or left hand—to play one number with someone like Duke or Basie. I still can't believe it happened to me.

MD: Do you recall recording "Skin Deep"?

Louie: "Skin Deep" was very different. In those days it was difficult to record fast drum and cymbal parts. When that record came out, Buddy Rich called me and said, "Where did you record that?" I told him we did it live in Fresno, California in an old ballroom. The quality of the recording turned out so good that when we took it to Columbia, they said they couldn't do a better job than that. When Duke heard it in a playback the night we did it, he said,

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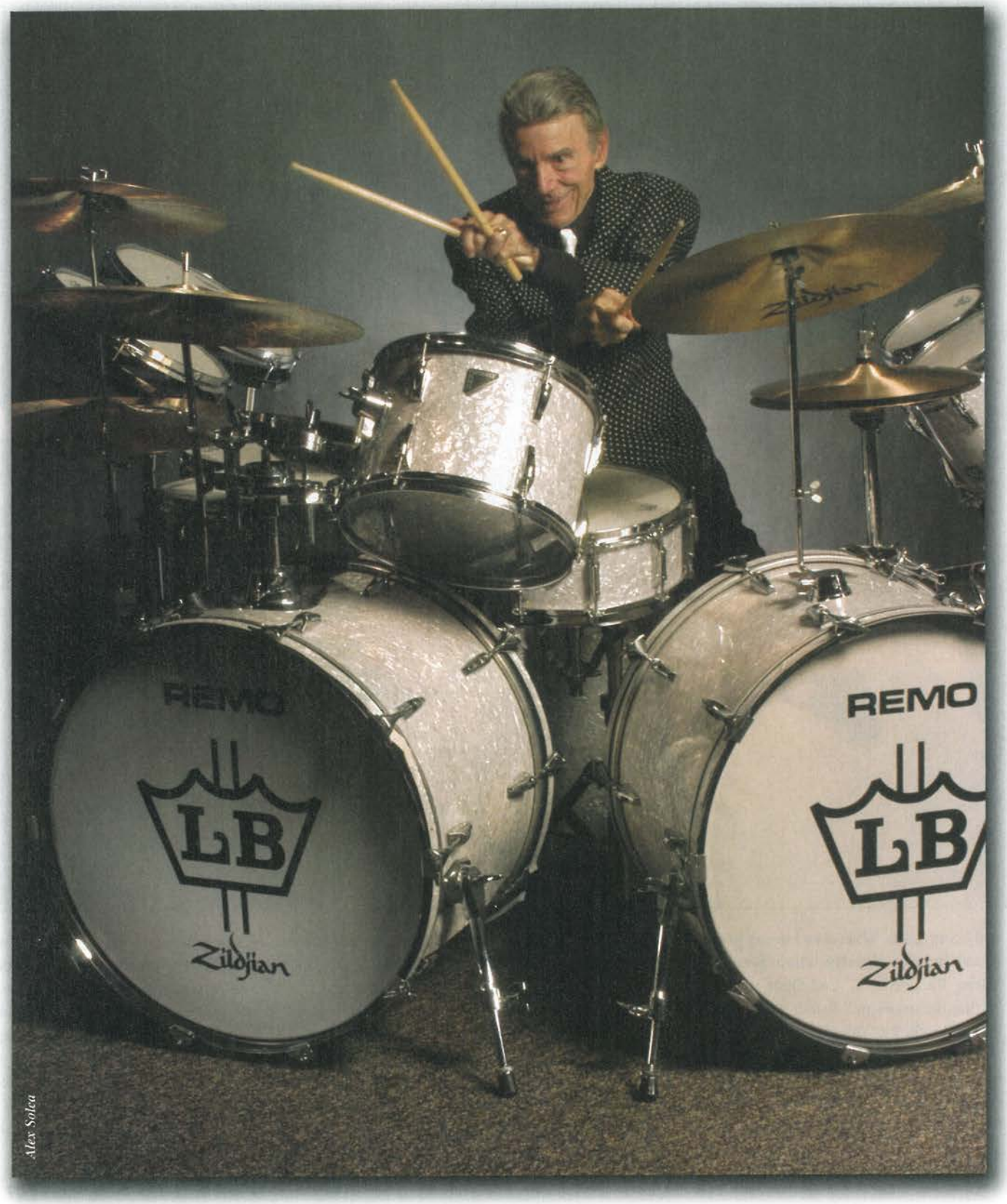

Alex Solca

THE HISTORY OF THE WHERE YOU CAME FROM YOU'RE GOING."

"That's how we're going to do 'Skin Deep.'" [The track can be found on *Ellington Uptown.*] "The Hawk Talks" was done at a studio in New York.

MD: Tell us a story about Duke Ellington.

Louie: People would ask what kind of man he was. Well, he was the kind of man who had his door open for us all the time. The reason he had people in his band for fifty years was because they were like family.

When I joined the band, there was no drum book. I had to just sit down and start playing. That was easy for me because, playing in a jazz band, I could look over at the trombone or trumpet part and see where I was.

One time Duke called me to come to New York to play with Leonard Bernstein's New York Philharmonic Orchestra. When I got there, there were a hundred twenty-five musicians all ready to play. There were only two players from Duke's regular band—the bass player and me. We were performing a tune called "The Golden Broom And The Green Apple," twenty-five minutes of music that Duke wrote, and I had nothing to go by. I was sitting there at the stand, and Duke came up on the bandstand, ready to give a downbeat. He looked at me and he could tell I was worried when I shrugged my shoulders. He said, "The first part's in 3/4." I said, "Thanks." That was it. He lowered his hands for a downbeat, I started playing, and watched him real close for an hour and a half.

During the first break, the other musicians asked if I had memorized the piece. I told them I had never heard it before in my life. Duke was a great conductor. That first day, I took the score home with me and made a complete drum part. Then, before we finished recording, I said, "Duke, here's a drum part for whoever comes in after me to play it." He said, "Now you know why I didn't write a drum part. I got you to do it and you're the best." But that experience was one of the most exciting things that happened to me in that band.

MD: Other favorite recordings?

Louie: *Soul On Top* with James Brown. It was done in 1969. James Brown called me, and I asked, "Are you sure you've got the right guy?" He said he had Ira Nelson write the charts and he was going to do an album of half jazz and half his band. That record was just released on CD.

MD: James Brown is a lot different from Duke Ellington.

Louie: I thought it was strange too, but he explained to me that his roots were in jazz and he wanted to do something with some of his favorite players. We clicked right off. Ray Brown played bass on it. And James did a song I wrote for him called "I Need Your Key (To Turn Me On)," which is on there.

Another one of the bandleaders I played with was Tommy Dorsey. I did a couple of things with him that Billy Finnegan wrote the arrangements for, and I really enjoyed those.

MD: Tell us a Tommy Dorsey story.

Louie: We had to play a date once in South Carolina in 1947, and Charlie Shavers was in the band. Charlie was black. It came time to play this date and the guy who booked the date told Tommy, "I understand you have a black person in the band." Tommy Dorsey said, "You talking about Charlie Shavers? Yes, he's with us and he's a star of my band." The guy said, "He can't work this date with you." Tommy said, "Who said so? You want me and my band, I'm bringing down Charlie Shavers." He said, "You can't use Charlie Shavers." Well, they had to call the governor and get it cleared for Charlie to come down.

We walked in to have dinner, and they had a big table set for the band and one little table in the corner that was for Charlie. Tommy Dorsey said, "Charlie is part of my band." Then that night on the gig, five guys came in looking for trouble with baseball bats in their hands. They walked up to the

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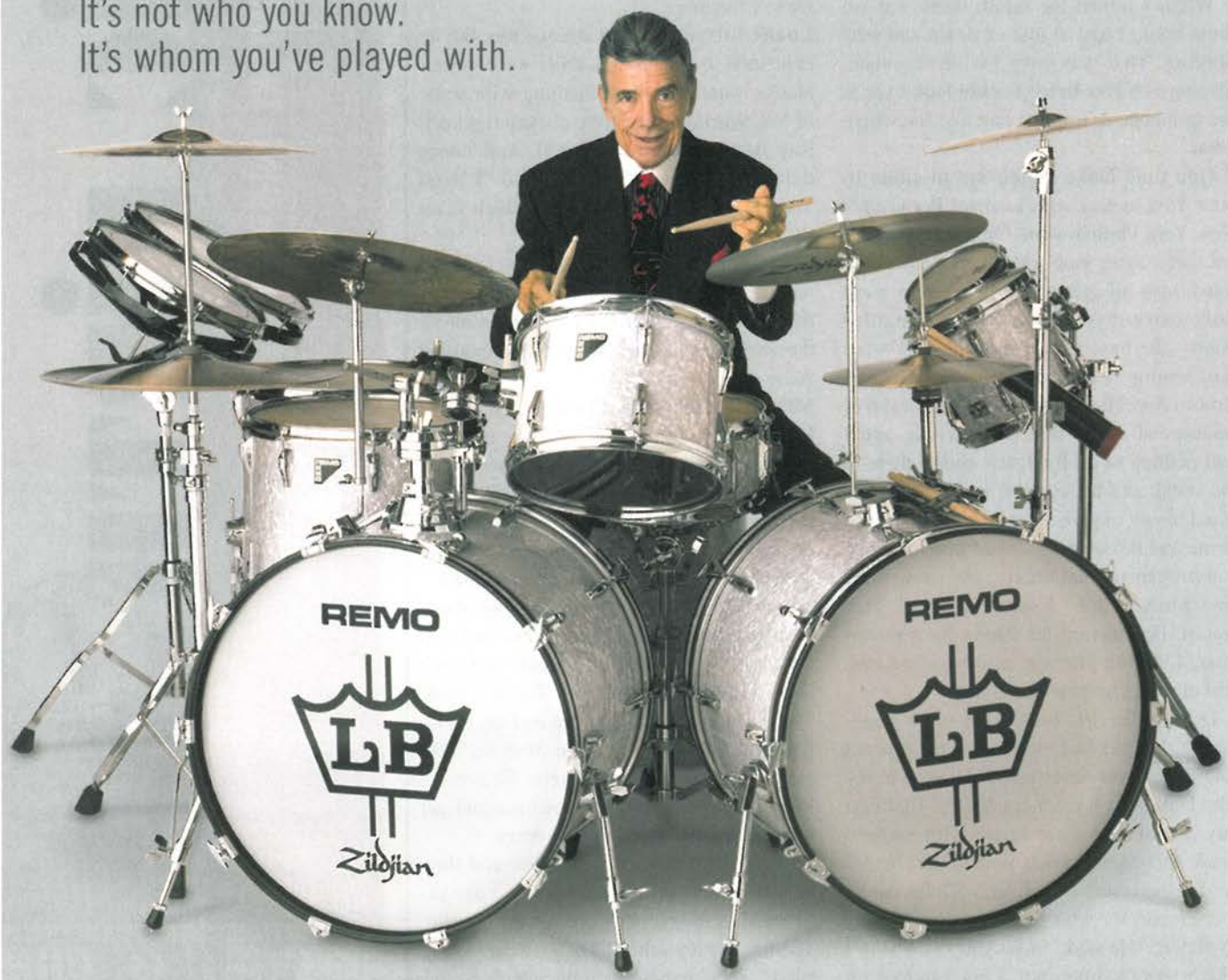

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bandstand, and Tommy Dorsey knew what was happening. Charlie and I took a couple of towels and wrapped them around our hands because we figured there was going to be a fight. Tommy was tough. He walked to the front of the stage, looked at the five guys, and said, "I don't want any trouble from you guys or I'll wrap this trombone around your necks." By that time, the police came in and escorted the five guys out. Yes, it was a different era back then.

MD: Any other recordings you want to mention?

Louie: All of the recordings I did with Pearl were dynamite.

MD: Do you recall one particular album you loved making with her?

Louie: *The One And Only Pearl Bailey Sings* [Mercury]. She was a giver.

MD: When you recorded with her, did she sing live?

Louie: Oh, yes. She was never one for recording the band first and then coming in later. She was wonderful. There were three people who loved Pearl, but they didn't want her on their bill—Jack Benny, Sammy Davis Jr., and Frank Sinatra. She had such power on stage that they didn't want to follow her. When Jack Benny played the Tropicana with her, he insisted on going on first.

MD: When did you meet Pearl?

Louie: When I was with Harry James' band, I stayed at Juan Tizol's house. They were good friends of Pearl's, and they were always saying, "You've got to meet Pearl one day." The opportunity came one day when I was with Ellington's band in Washington, DC and Pearl was coming to town to play. Juan took me to see her, I met her, and sent her roses the next day. I then saw her four nights in a row. On the fourth night I said, "I have a question to ask you," and she said, "The answer is yes," and that was it. We got married. I was twenty-six.

MD: Those were racially heated times. You once talked about the early days with Pearl and an incident at a restaurant.

Louie: Yeah, two young people wanted to wait on us but were crying because the manager said they couldn't serve us. When we walked out, the manager ran after us and said, "I didn't know you were Pearl Bailey. Come on back." Pearl said, "No thanks."

MD: Benny Goodman was notoriously difficult to work with. What was your experience with him?

Louie: It was a great experience. Benny knew how to rehearse a band. First of all, he was a great player. Yes, he was a little weird. Sometimes he'd look at me and call me by a different name—"Hey pops." I joined the band at seventeen years old and took Gene Krupa's place. I was playing "Sing Sing Sing" and everything was going great. And then, all of a sudden, Benny fired me. All the guys in the band asked him, "Why did you fire that kid?" And Benny said, "I don't know."

When I got home, my dad was at the

Louie on one of his first double bass kits

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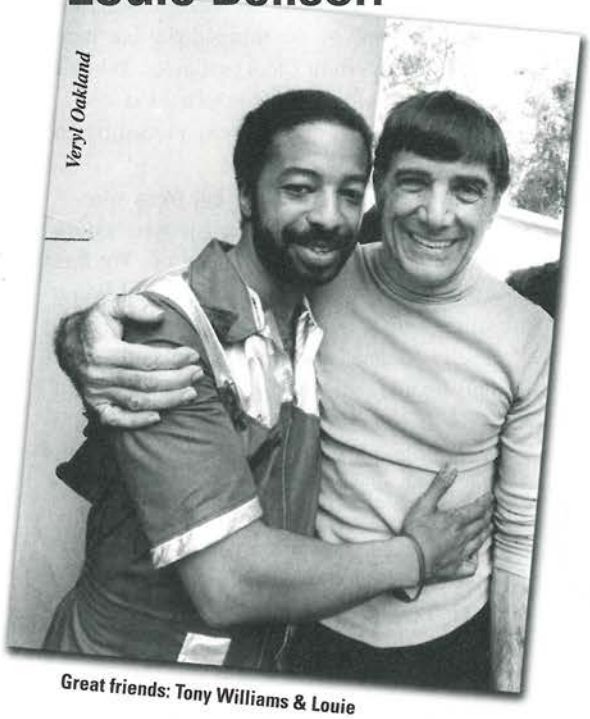

Great friends: Tony Williams & Louie

train station to meet me, and he said, "Benny Goodman's kept me up all night by constantly calling. Go back to New York. He wants you back in the band." Benny never told me what he was thinking of, but one of the guys said, "You were too good." After that, we got along great. He was a master musician.

MD: How did you feel as a seventeen-year-old going on the road with such a famous musician?

Louie: Well, I was overly confident. But I thought I was ready because I had a lot of experience playing with small groups and big bands.

MD: That brings up a good point. You're acknowledged as being a drummer who can make the music work in either a small group or big band setting. Can you explain the difference in a drummer's approach to both?

Louie: Volume is one difference. Another is interpretation. When you're playing in a small group, you're working with fewer players and you have to have a lot of invention going. With a big band, things are blocked off for you. There are written charts, while with a small band, everything is improvised. The key is that you have to listen to one another and look at one another.

Rhythm sections must have eye contact. I learned that from Basie, who said, "If I have a drummer, I want to see him because I may give him one of these [raised eyebrows] or one of these [frown]." Eye contact and listening are important. In a big band, you have to have strength and power. In some of those bands, when they hit a double *ff* chord, you could hear it all the way around the block. As a drummer, you have to be ready for that kind of power. Be loud, but *musically* loud.

MD: What have been your least favorite recordings and why?

Louie: I think all the recordings I did with

Great rivals (and friends): Louie and Buddy Rich

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B. 9x10 tom
C. 5½x14 snare
D. 9x13 tom
E. 16x16 floor tom
F. 16x16 floor tom
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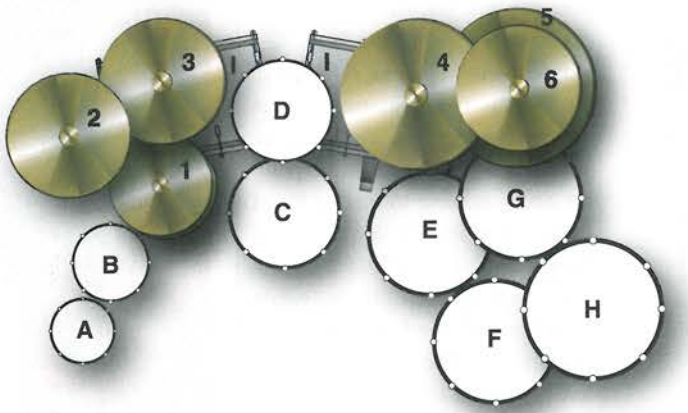
H. 18" RotoTom
I. 16x24 bass drum



Cymbals: Zildjian

1. 14" A Quick Beat hi-hats
2. 17" A medium-thin crash
3. 18" A thin crash
4. 21" A Sweet ride
5. 22" A Swish Knocker
6. 18" A thin crash

Heads: Remo coated Ambassador snare batter, Ambassador snare-side, Renaissance RA on tom batters with clear Ambassadors on bottoms, Renaissance RA on bass drum batters with coated Ambassadors on front, Renaissance RA on roto-toms

Sticks: Zildjian Louie Bellson signature model

bands were musically wonderful. But I do feel that some of the things I did out here in the studios didn't feel that great. When I got home, I wondered if I did a good job.

MD: Are you talking about recording in the '70s?

Louie: Yeah. It was different from when I played with a band. When I played with a band, we had happiness going on. We had great music. Coming out to LA and doing studio work was a little boring to me. Shelly Manne, one of my favorite players and people, said he found it hard to deal with it out here after being with Stan Kenton and Woody Herman. We both felt the same way. In the studios, it felt like they took the magic out of the music. Shelly and I came from being on the road, playing for a live audience.

MD: Please talk about a favorite artist to work with.

Louie: Oscar Peterson was one. He was a champion of technique, a champion of soul, a champion of ballads, an uncanny player. Another one is Art Tatum. And Duke, of course. And Benny Goodman because I learned so much from him. He gave me a lot of exposure. I loved playing

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— Rhythm Magazine - UK (July 2004)

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with all these people. Duke used to say there are two kinds of music—good and bad. I was lucky to play good music all the time.

MD: Did you ever work for any difficult artists?

Louie: On *The Tonight Show*, before Eddie Shaughnessy came out to LA, Johnny Carson would come out here from New York for two weeks at a time, and when he did that I'd play with the band. On one of those occasions, a young singer from England named Lulu was scheduled to appear. While we were rehearsing with the band, she came in with her manager. We started rehearsing and she stopped the band and said to me, "Don't play the bass drum on this number." For some reason, I looked over at her manager, and he said to me, "Play the bass drum." I played the bass drum and after about eight bars she stopped me again and said, "*Don't* play the bass drum." And I said, "But your manager...." "*Don't play the bass drum.*" I looked over at him again and he said, "Play the bass drum." So I took the sticks, banged them on the tom-tom, and stood up and said to the manager, "I suggest that both of you go in a room and decide what you want to do, and I'll do it." The whole band applauded.

The great drumming communicator: Louie in clinic.

I had a good time playing with every act on that show, except for that one. Ella came on many times. Sammy Davis came on. There was never a problem with the big stars. They'd come in with their music ready, the band was good, and we could play it.

MD: Do you still have your own band?

Louie: My band in LA is excellent. I have people like Pete Christlieb, Richie Woodard, Ray Reed, Bobby Shue, and Carl Saunders—great players. When Doc Severinsen first came out here, he took most of my players for his band.

I have bands all over now. I have it worked out that if I get a gig in Chicago, I have a great band in Chicago that I use, and one in New York, because to transport guys from LA would be impossible economically.

MD: What are your favorite recordings of your own band?

Louie: *Live From New York* is one of my favorites with my New York band. Francine likes it, because there's a song on it that I wrote called "Francine." That's how I get in the front door every day. And another recording I like is from out here, *The Art Of The Chart,* on Concord.

MD: They say that it's difficult to make your life in jazz. Have you found that to be true?

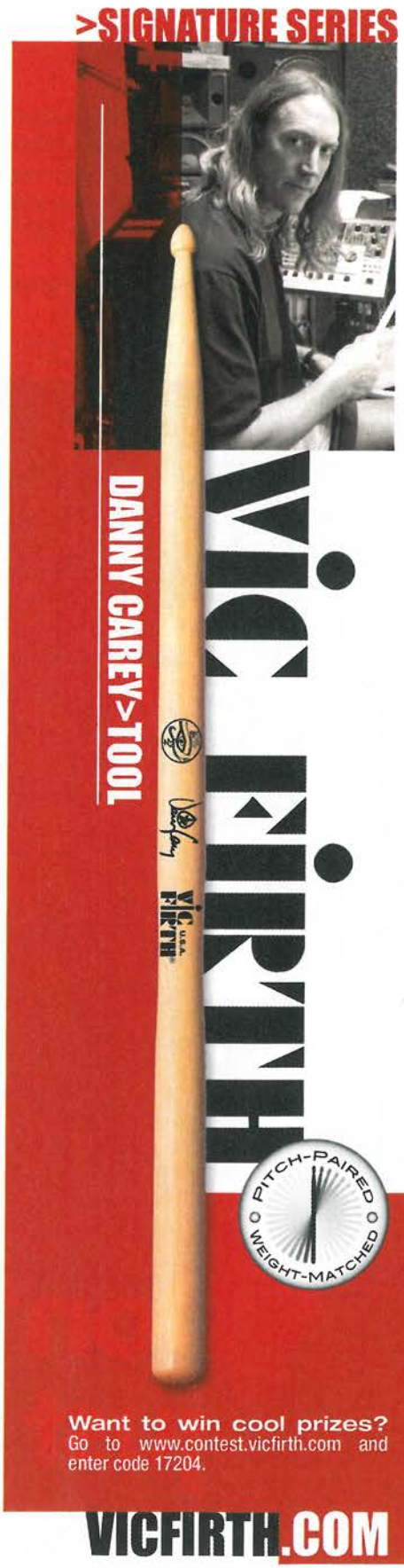
Louie: In some cases I have. So many musicians had to go to Europe for their just due. They rolled out the red carpet for Dizzy, Bird, Duke, and Benny. Here, for a long time the word "jazz" meant you were a dope-head. But thank God for college students, who back in the '60s and '70s knew about good music. The colleges were our saviors.

MD: Were there hard lessons in music?

Louie: Yes there were. Unfortunately, some of the musicians I came up with were juice heads. They drank a lot. I tried to stay away from that. They used to call me "Apples" when I was starting out, because I always had a sack of apples with me in the back of the bus. Everybody else was getting drunk and I was eating apples.

MD: Why were you so smart?

Louie: My dad taught me a long time ago that if you're playing a physical instrument, your arms and legs need to be in shape and you have to take care of yourself. You have to be careful what you eat, get plenty of rest, and don't bother with getting drunk or



using dope, because you'll never make it with that. You won't last long. I had a good background and it stuck with me.

MD: You never fell into it?

Louie: No. Never smoked, never drank—maybe a glass of wine now and then. Somebody tried to give me cocaine once and I said, "No thanks." And someone tried to get me to shoot up with heroin and I said, "No way."

MD: Did you see it hurt them as musicians?

Louie: Oh, yeah. That was a great lesson that I saw happen—incredible musicians harming themselves and their careers with drugs. Today there are a lot of musicians on health kicks, which is good.

MD: I understand you practiced quite a bit as a kid. How many hours did you practice when you were, say, fifteen?

Louie: I practiced fifteen hours a day on the weekends and every day during the summers. I'd play to records. During school days, I practiced three hours a day and I'd also teach in my dad's music store.

MD: What records were you playing to?

Louie: Anything by Duke, Basie, Lionel Hampton, Art Tatum, Dizzy, Bird, Benny Goodman, Tommy Dorsey, Harry James—all the greats. I did that, not realizing that one day I'd be playing with those guys.

I was lucky to come from a strong musical background. By the time I was thirteen years old, my dad taught me practically every aria from every opera. I could sing every one of them. My first lesson with Buddy Baker was working on Ravel's full symphonic score. I then went on to study Bartok, Stravinsky, and Beethoven. That's why I laugh when people call me a jazz drummer. My early training was classical as well as jazz.

MD: When you decided to make a living at music, how did you go about making that happen?

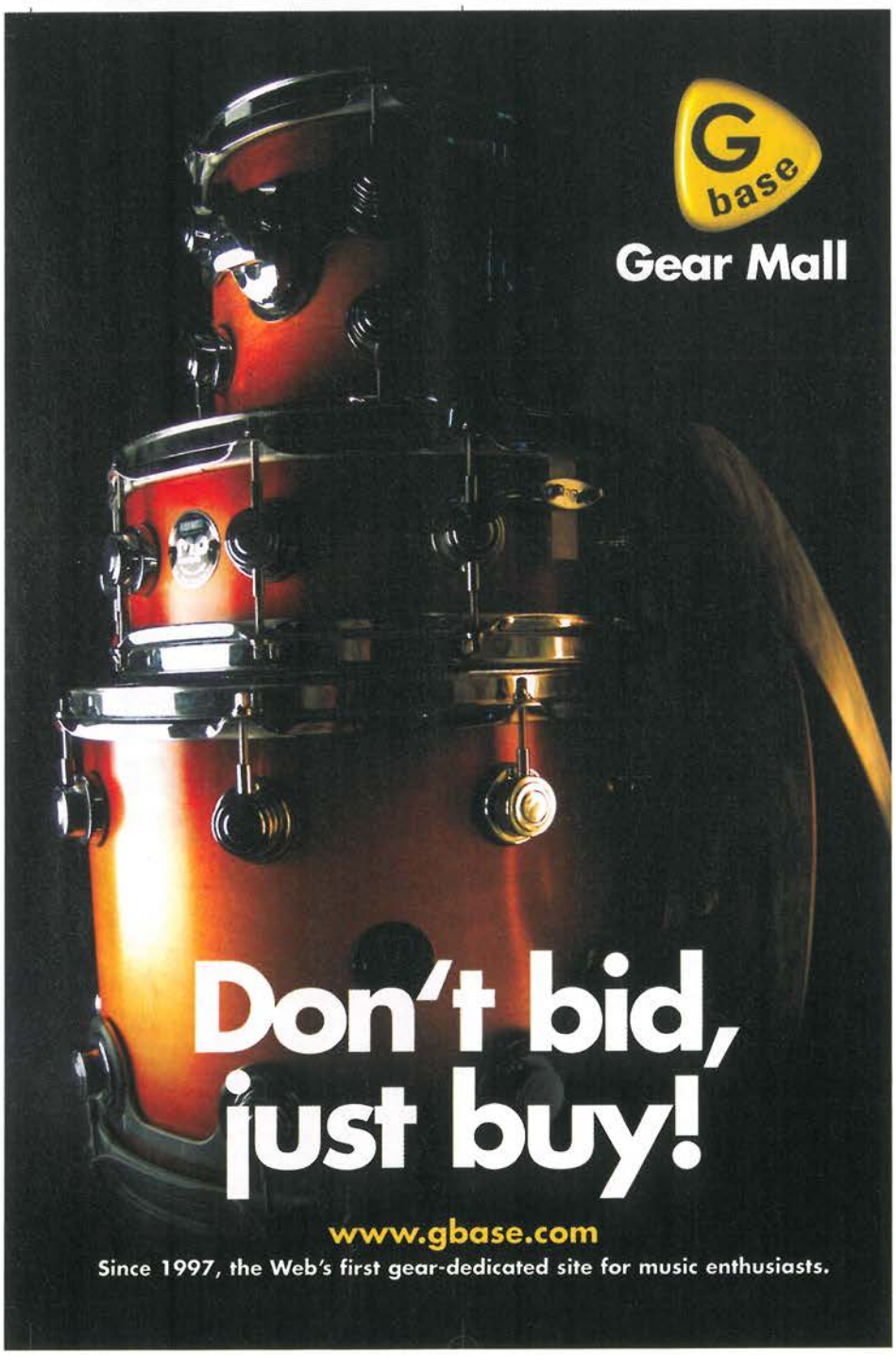
Louie: Having all this at my disposal—my dad and other teachers—when a band would come to town, people would say, "Get Louie to play the drums." That's what started the whole ball rolling. Ted Fio Rito offered me a job right off the bat while I was still in high school. I had three months left, so I told him I could join him after I graduated if he wanted me to. He said, "You've got a deal." He kept his word, and in three months I got my diploma and I was out in Hollywood playing with his band.

MD: What would you tell young drummers today?

Louie: A young drummer has to have a good teacher, and he must have records to learn how to play jazz, to get the jazz feel, and records to learn the contemporary feel—the 8th-note feel, rhythm 'n' blues, and rock 'n' roll. They should also learn the history of the instrument. They must listen to great artists like Buddy Rich, Gene Krupa, Shelly Manne, and Jo Jones. You have to know where you came from in order to know where you're going. I also feel it's very important for drummers to learn how to read. And they should take piano lessons and learn harmony and theory. It makes you a better musician.

MD: Were you ever called to do a gig that you weren't sure you were right for, but once you were there it surprised you?

Louie: I remember when I was with Tommy Dorsey's band. That was the toughest gig I ever had as far as physical labor. We did six months of one-nighters with one day off, and we were traveling as much as five hundred miles a night on the

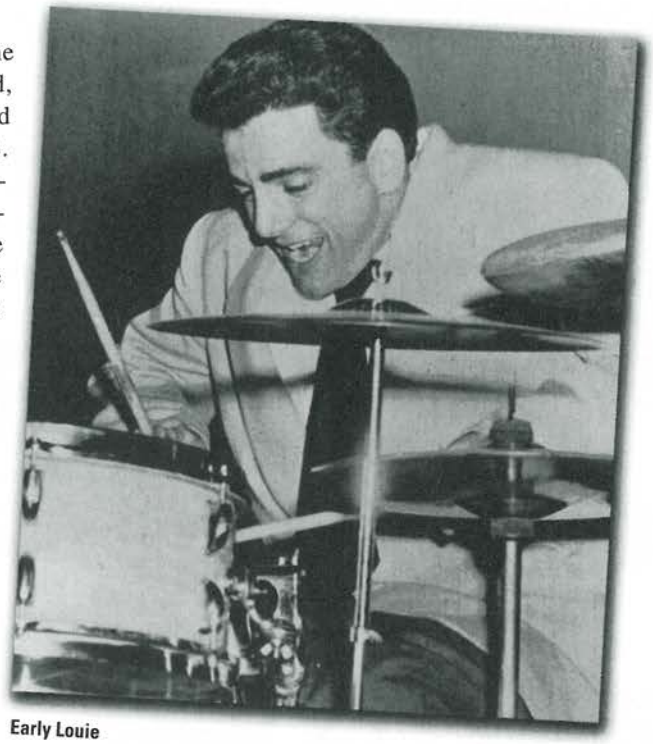


bus. That was in 1947.

I remember one time we were all exhausted, but we were required to do a record date. Miraculously, everything just flowed beautifully. Maybe we were so tired that we were relaxed and it just came out that way.

MD: Other tough gigs?

Louie: Playing the Apollo Theater in 1952 was a tough gig. It was good music. It was with Duke's band; Pearl and Bill Bailey were on the bill, too. We had to do nine shows a day. We started at 9:00 in the morning, and we had to get up early enough before that to have breakfast. Then we played a 10:00 show, an 11:00 show, had time to eat a bowl of soup, and then we did a 1:00, 2:00, then had a quick sandwich, and on and on. The sets were close to an hour, so we had to eat when we had the chance. I had to play "Skin Deep" nine times a day—short versions of it. But that was part of the gig back then. We were younger. If we had to do it today, we'd all die. [laughs]



Early Louie

MD: How did you keep yourself up?

Louie: We were playing great music. A lot of times, when our bus would roll into town, we'd stop at a corner and see a guy with a lunch pail in his hand going to a factory to work at something he didn't like. I'd say to myself, "I feel so lucky. I'm in a

BELLSON'S Best

Recordings

Artist	Album
Louie Bellson	Live From New York (Telarc 83334)
Louie Bellson	Dynamite! (Concord 4105)
Duke Ellington	Ellington Uptown (featuring "Skin Deep," Columbia)
Louie Bellson	The Art Of The Chart (Concord 4800)
Louie Bellson	The Louie Bellson Explosion (Fantasy 726-2)
Louie Bellson	Peaceful Thunder (Musicmasters 65074-2)
Louie Bellson	Their Time Was The Greatest! (Concord 4683)
Louie Bellson	East Side Suite (Musicmasters 5009-2)

Favorites

Artist	Album	Drummer
Count Basie	all	Jo Jones
Duke Ellington	all	Sonny Greer
Buddy Rich	West Side Story	Buddy Rich
Bela Bartok	Concerto For Orchestra	
Maurice Ravel	Daphne And Chloe	

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bus going to do something I love, and that poor guy is going to a factory to do hard labor."

Tony Bennett told me one time that a producer wanted him to record a certain song that he didn't really like. Tony said, "No, I'm not going to do it." "Why not? You'll make a lot of money." And Tony said, "If I had a bad song that became a big hit, I'd have to sing it every night. It wouldn't be in my heart."

MD: Tell us about your earliest thoughts about the double bass drumset.

Louie: I was a tap dancer as a kid; my sister was a very good tap dancer too. But that background inspired me to want to put the left leg to work, not only on the hi-hat, but with something more. Plus I'm ambidextrous. So in 1938, I drew up a two bass drum setup. My teacher walked over and said, "What's that?" I said, "I'm inventing a double bass drumset," and he said, "You do that and I'll pass you." In 1939 and 1940, when my career was just getting started, I approached a drum company who said, "You and Buck Rogers ought to go to the moon. You're crazy." It took a little time. But once I got it started, I used it in Ted Fio Rito's band, Tommy Dorsey's band, and, of course, with Duke.

MD: What did Ted think when he first saw it?

Louie: He thought it was a great idea. Tommy Dorsey was ready for it. Not only did we use a double bass drumkit, we had a revolving platform so that the layman could understand what I was doing. During a solo, the kit would spin around so everyone could see what I was doing. I also had some fun visual aspects that I would do. When the drumset would turn around and I was playing the double bass, a light would go on. I also used some luminous sticks.

MD: You made a big splash with your drumming early on. But you also seemed to know from a young age that you wanted to be a composer. How did you know that?

Louie: My father. He played all the instruments. By the time I was twelve, he made me aware of the keyboards. I complained, "Dad, I don't want to learn the piano, I want to play drums." He said, "You're going to play drums, but go to the keyboard and I'll give you your first lesson in harmony and theory." Well, after that, I was like a vacuum cleaner. I couldn't get enough time with him on harmony and theory. As I said, I learned all of the arias and would sing them as a kid just because I loved them. I used to be called "Tido" when I was a kid—"do re mi fa sol la TI DO"—because I would be singing. And my dad would say, "Whatever idea you come up with, sing it. Then put it together and write a tune."

MD: Of your compositions, which are your favorites?

Louie: One of my favorite pieces is one I received a Grammy nomination for five years ago, "Ellington And Strayhorn Medley." It was for big band. Another one would be "Concerto For Drumset And Full Orchestra." I wrote that with Harold Faberman, who was with the Boston Symphony. It was for a full orchestra. It's about a thirty-five-minute piece.

I'm working on something now that I'm hoping to get USC to do next year. It's called "Magic Six." I picked six people who inspired me—King Hussain of Jordan, because he was a man of peace, Martin Luther King, and four musicians: Benny Carter, Count Basie, Billy Strayhorn, and Duke Ellington. The piece is for big band and full choir. And I've also completed a project I wrote called *The Sacred Music Of Louie Bellson*, which premiered at USC in 2000. We're still looking for distribution.

MD: You still keep busy?

Louie: Oh, yeah. I write every day. It might be four bars, it might be eight. And I put the sticks in my hands every day. I practice on a pad or get in my car and go down to Remo's place and play on a drumset. I have a drumset in San Jose, where we also live. So if I get called for a gig, I know my hands and feet are ready for it. At eighty years old, there are a lot of guys who aren't walking too well. I know some fifty-year-old guys who don't.

MD: What do you do to stay in shape?

Louie: I do a lot of walking, I go to therapy three times a week, and I watch my diet and get plenty of rest. If you do that, you can last a lot longer. I know there will be a time when I have to say I can't do it anymore, at least on a full scale. For now I'm cutting back gradually and doing what I can do well. I'm not going to go out on stage and make a fool of myself—I won't do that to me or to my audience. I have too much respect for my audience.

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Louie Bellson

STYLE & ANALYSIS

by John Riley

There are so many successes in Louie Bellson's career that it's difficult to think of an area of music in which he hasn't contributed and excelled. Mr. Bellson is at once a virtuoso drummer, respected bandleader, in-demand sideman, author, instrument design innovator, dedicated educator, fine composer and arranger, *and* one of the sweetest, most sincere people you will ever meet.

Some people spend their entire life searching for their sound on the drums. This isn't Louie's way. Initially inspired by Chick Webb and Sid Catlett, Louie found his voice very early on by combining the clear and melodic phrasing of Gene Krupa with the swinging groove of Papa Jo Jones and the extraordinary speed of Buddy Rich. He was also exposed to and given an appreciation for fine musicianship as a youngster working in his family's music store. An excellent example of the young Louie on drums can be heard on the 1946 Benny Goodman recording "Oh Baby."

Throughout his career Louie has displayed a beautiful feel, flow, sound, and clarity. One of his innovations, circa 1938, is the use of a larger drumkit incorporating two bass drums and numerous toms. But in using a large kit, Louie's sound has never been heavy or overpowering. While his solos display his remarkable musical instincts and technical prowess, his accompaniment of soloists and ensembles is always swinging and economical.

First Encounter

I first met Mr. Bellson in the mid-1970s when I was the "junior" clinician at a jazz camp at Mt. Hood, Oregon. I remember our first encounter: I was filling in for Louie at a faculty rehearsal because he hadn't yet arrived at the camp. At one point I sensed someone standing behind me, and it was Louie. At the end of the song I naturally began to relinquish the stage, when he just smiled and said, "Stay right where you are. You sound great, I want to hear some more."

Though it was far from reality, Louie was the first professional drummer to treat me like a peer. We only hung out for a few days in Oregon, but every time our paths have crossed in the ensuing thirty years, he has remembered me and greeted me like a long lost brother. And here's the real sign of the man: I've observed that Louie shows that same kind of interest, respect, and encouragement to everyone he encounters.

Foot Technique

Louie is a fantastic and giving teacher; he has no secrets and will share his knowledge freely. During the time of our first meeting, I was experiencing some uncertainty about my bass drum technique—whether to play flat-footed or heel-up. Louie straightened me right out and, to this day, I use his analogy whenever asked about foot technique. He suggested concentrating on playing flat-footed and that once that technique was mastered, the heel-up technique would be a natural outgrowth. (Louie said the opposite wasn't true.)

Louie told me that the thing to focus on was developing a pivot point, and then everything else would fall into place. He painted a vivid picture, telling me to imagine placing my shoe on the bass drum pedal. Then he told me to imagine I had some very long nails and to hammer those nails through the inside of the shoe, through the heel of the shoe, through the heel plate of the pedal, and "into the center of the earth." The idea was to establish the point around which the foot and ankle turned.

To illustrate the correct, solid sensation, Louie got down on his hands and knees to hold the heel of my shoe firmly in place as I played. This felt awkward and restricting at first, but as I gained a better sense of the way everything floated over and around my heel, my balance, sound, speed, and relaxation all improved.

Generosity

Louie's generosity on the bandstand is legendary. The reason he plays is simple: to make the other musicians sound their best. His generosity off the bandstand is also legendary: Steve Gadd once complimented Louie on his dapper attire. The next day that suit was delivered to Steve as a gift! After a conversation at the first American Drummers Achievement Awards about our mutual love of Thad Jones' music, Louie sent me five big band arrangements Thad had written especially for him.

Solo Analysis

We are fortunate to have film footage of Mr. Bellson extending from the earliest years of his remarkable career right up to today. This stylistic analysis will focus on three DVDs: *Legends Of Jazz Drumming, Part 1*, which features Louie with the Duke Ellington band in 1950; *Classic Drum Solos And Drum Battles* from 1969, which includes Louie playing an extended tour de force solo with Dizzy Gillespie; and *Louie Bellson And His Big Band*, which is an entire concert set from the 1980s.

Louie's solos are always crowd-pleasers and great to watch. They are also studies in pacing and proportion. Two of his best known solos were done in the early 1950s with the Duke Ellington Orchestra: "Skin Deep," and "The Hawk Talks," which is included on the *Legends* DVD. These solos are outstanding. Few people, however, realize that the compositions and arrangements were also written by Louie. The fact that the great Duke Ellington welcomed these pieces into his band's repertoire is another testament to Louie's complete musicianship.

Let's take a look at the construction of Louie's fantastic untitled extended solo included on the *Classic* DVD. The solo is in six sections:

1) The solo opens on the snare drum with a thorough melodic and technical exploration. The intensity increases as the cymbals and toms are gradually added. A double bass drum roll is used as a transition to the next section.

2) Louie eases the pace when he switches to brushes and beautifully explores their texture on the snare drum, then around the kit. His brush playing is elegant and masterful, and it must be seen to be appreciated. Bass drum roll transition.

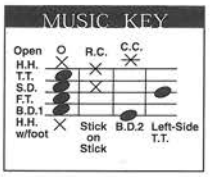
3) The solo gradually intensifies with the introduction of the Jingle Sticks. Bass drum roll transition.

4) Back to full wood on the snare drum, with double bass drum interaction.

5) An exploration of cymbal textures.

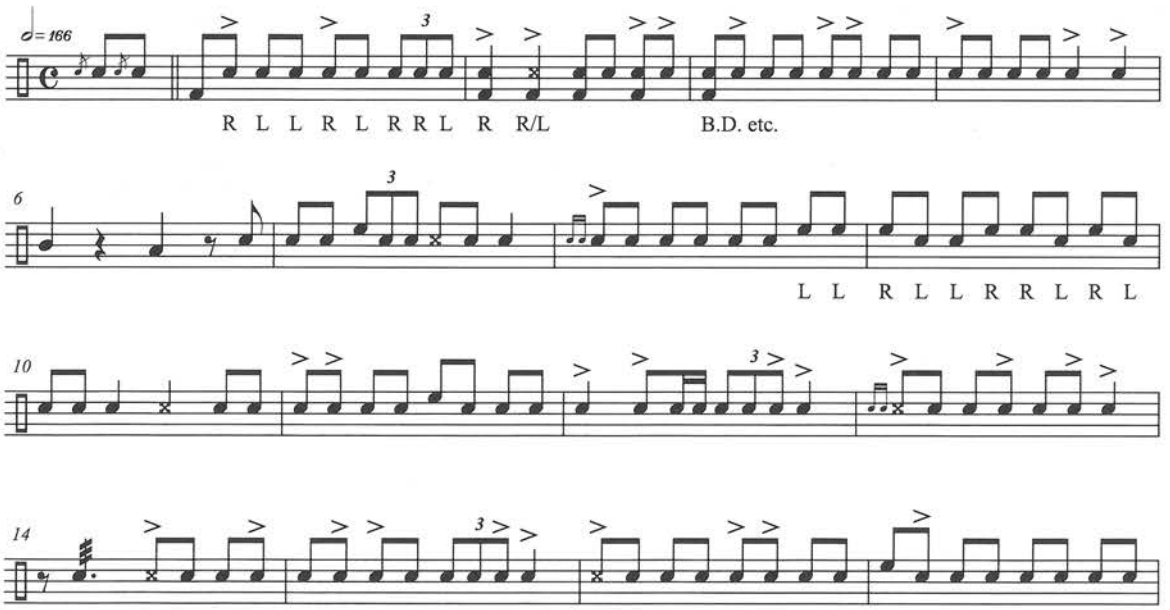
6) The solo climaxes with a return to the snare drum and powerful double bass drum and cymbal combinations.

Throughout the solos mentioned above and the transcription to follow, there is ample evidence of Louie's power and dexterity. Equally impressive to me is his sound and touch. Louie is one of the first players to develop a high degree of finger technique, and the addition of this resource greatly expands one's range of expression and low-volume speed, as evident in each of Louie's solos.



The following is a compilation of some of Louie's favorite solo ideas. They're taken from "The Hawk Talks" (*Legends Of Jazz Drumming*, Part 1 DVD), from the untitled solo on the *Classic Drum Solos And Drum Battles* DVD, and from "The Drum Squad" (*Louie Bellson And His Big Band* DVD).

Here is a complete transcription of Louie's great solo on "The Drum Squad" from the *Louie Bellson Big Band* DVD. This song is based on Gershwin's "I've Got Rhythm." From his opening brush statement, to his shaping of the ensemble figures and his final solo, Louie plays the arrangement beautifully. The solo begins at chapter 2 on the DVD. Like all of Louie's work, this solo is built from outstanding snare drumming. Notice the strong groove, consistent eight-measure phrases, pacing, and thematic development.



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Louie is a renowned soloist, and his "Explosion" on the same DVD is another tour de force. But like any working drummer, much more of his time is spent accompanying others than playing drum solos. Many great examples of Louie "the accompanist" can be seen on the big band DVD. His eagerness to serve the music is evident through his playing and his body language; he's having *fun* playing with the band. The way he supports and helps shape the music is top-shelf all the way. I especially appreciate the way he relishes his role accompanying Benny Bailey with his percolating but non-intrusive brush playing during the melody of "We've Come A Long Way Together." His groovy shuffle on "Blues For Freddy" is also notable.

Remember the old gag about the five-piece band—four musicians and a drummer? Louie Bellson was one of the first men to break that stereotype. Thank you, Louie Bellson, you've shown all of us the way.

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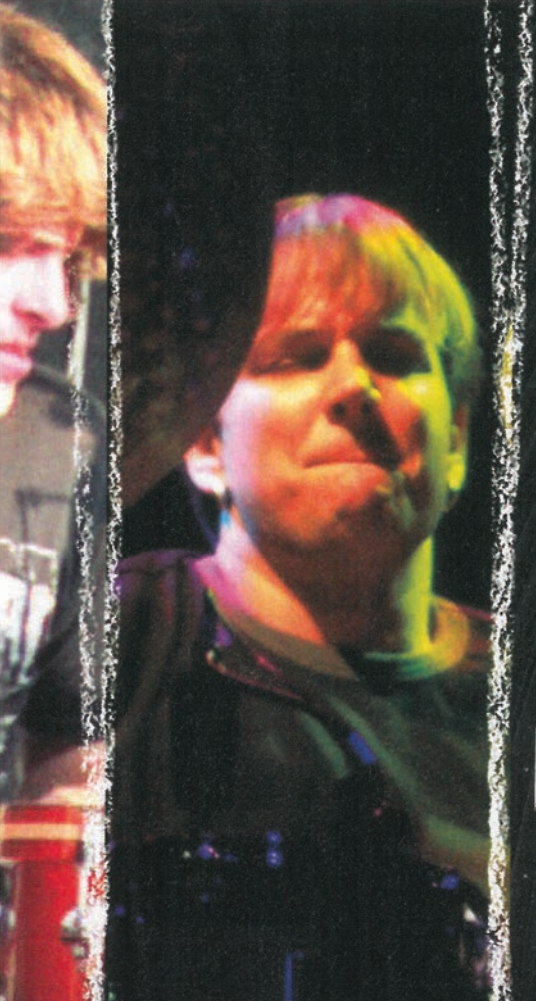

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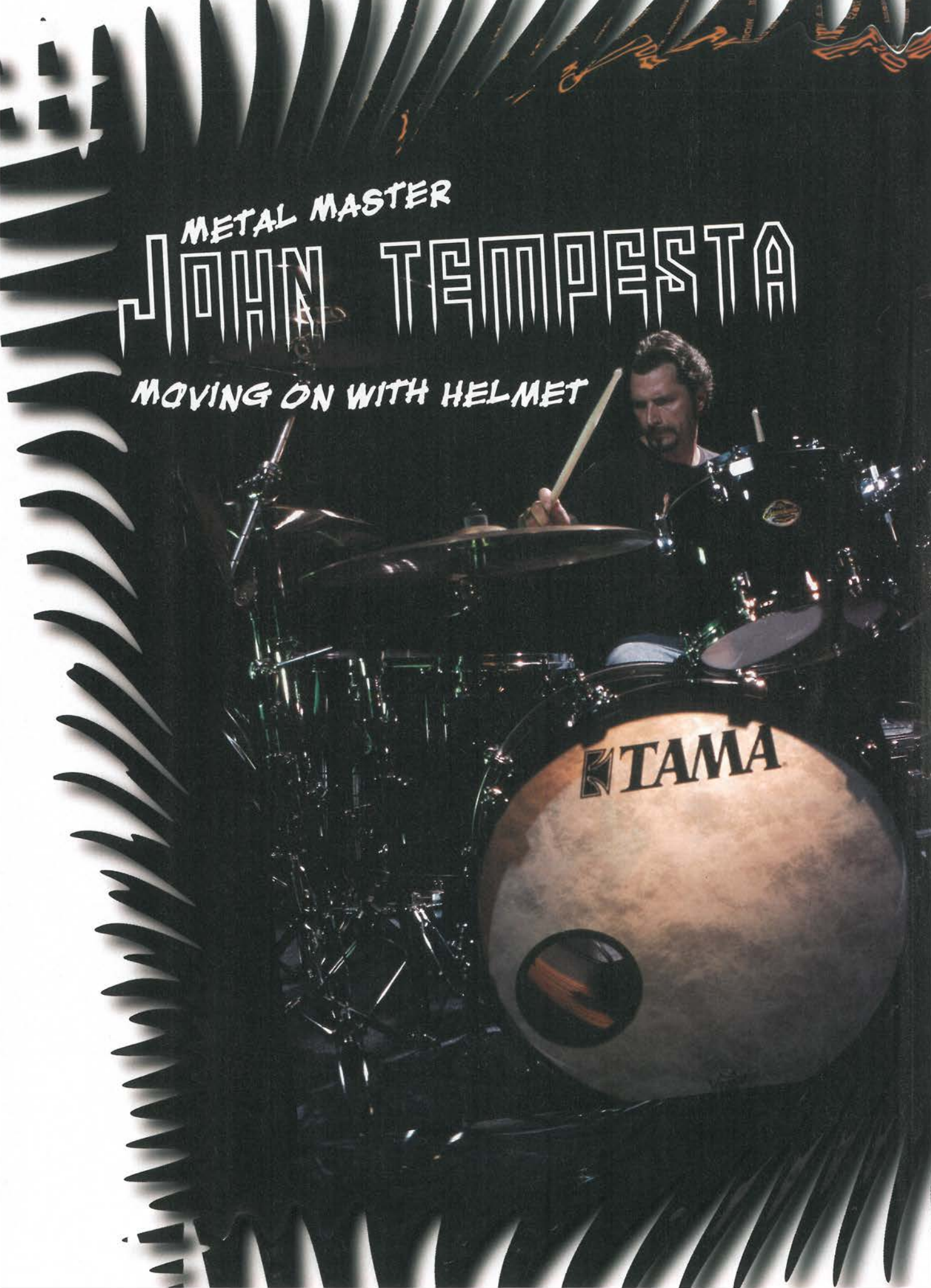


IN A CAREER SPANNING NEARLY TWO DECADES, New York City native John Tempesta's body of work has earned him a place among metal's best-known and most-respected drummers. Early in his career John gained crucial experience on the road and in the studio as drum tech for Anthrax's Charlie Benante. In 1989, after four years with Anthrax, Tempesta moved behind the drum throne of Bay Area thrash metal stalwarts Exodus.

After recording three albums with Exodus, Tempesta joined cross-town rivals Testament. Although he recorded only one studio album with that band (1994's *Low*), John left a lasting impression on guitarist Eric Peterson. "John is definitely one of the best drummers in the country," Peterson remarks. "He has the power of John Bonham, the finesse of Carter Beauford, and the aggression of Dave Lombardo. As a drummer, John really has it all."

Tempesta's profile grew in 1994, the year he joined industrial metal juggernauts White Zombie. The release of 1995's *Astro-Creep 2000* made White Zombie a household name, largely due to the dance club hit "More Human Than Human" and its accompanying video. "Tempesta was the best," says former White Zombie bassist Sean Yseult. "White Zombie toured quite a bit with Pantera, and besides Vinnie Paul, there were no drummers that could compare to John. He's like a machine, but *brutal*. You rarely hear such a hard hitter with such speed, detail, and finesse."

Rob Zombie liked Tempesta's playing so much that after White Zombie split up in 1997, he kept him on as drummer for his solo band. Playing with Rob Zombie also gave John the freedom to drum on albums like Black Sabbath guitarist Tony Iommi's self-titled solo record, as well as Black Label Society's *Hangover Music Vol. VI*.

When Zombie put his band on indefinite hiatus in 2003 (to focus on directing movies), Tempesta wasted no time landing his next gig. But he never imagined he'd become a core member in the new version of Helmet, one of the '90s' most influential metal bands. The way Tempesta tells the story, it was all about timing.

STORY BY GAIL WORLEY

PHOTOS BY ALEX SOLCA

"I WAS KICKING AROUND THE IDEA OF PLAYING WITH other people when I was introduced to [Helmet guitarist/singer/songwriter] Page Hamilton," Tempesta explains. "Page was in LA looking to put a new band together. After talking on the phone, we met at a bar for a couple beers, and he brought me a demo CD of some of his songs."

The two talked about jamming together to see what might happen. "Page came down to my drum rehearsal room and we just clicked," John recalls. "Once we started playing, we knew this was it." With bassist Rob Nicholson and producer Jay Baumgardner, Hamilton and Tempesta recorded demos for their as-yet-unnamed project. Then when Interscope Records chairman Jimmy Iovine contacted Hamilton, suggesting he put Helmet back together, the search for a band name went no further.

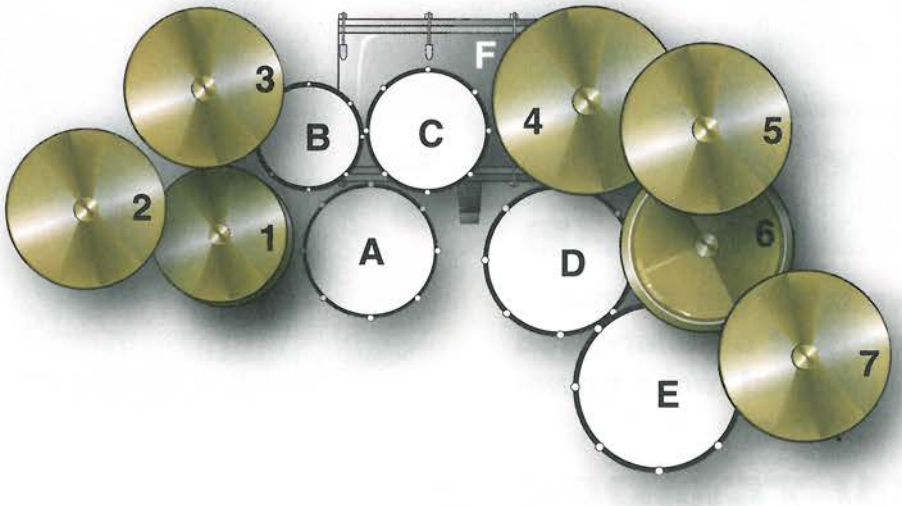
With Nicholson already obligated to join Ozzy Osbourne's band, guitarist Chris Traynor, briefly a part of Helmet before its dissolution in 1999, came on board to record rhythm guitar and bass for Helmet's first album of new material in seven years, *Size Matters*. Former Anthrax bassist Frank Bello completed Helmet's lineup after the album was recorded.

"It's great how things just developed over the past year and a half," Tempesta says. "The funny thing is I've always been such a big fan of Helmet. When I was in White Zombie, I'd listen to 'Unsung' every night to get pumped up right before we went onstage. Isn't that crazy!"

JOHN'S KIT

Drums: Tama Starclassic
African bubinga shells in piano black finish
A. 7x14 snare drum (prototype)
B. 9x10 tom
C. 10x13 tom
D. 16x16 floor tom
E. 18x18 floor tom
F. 18x24 bass drum

Cymbals: Zildjian
1. 15" A Custom Projection Mastersound hi-hats
2. 19" A Custom crash
3. 19" A Custom Projection crash
4. 22" A Ping ride (brilliant)
5. 20" A Custom Projection crash
6. 20" Oriental Classic China
7. 20" A Custom crash



Hardware: Tama, including Iron Cobra double pedal (medium-tight spring tension) with Danmar wood beaters, XL Protechtor Cases
Heads: Remo Emperor X snare batter, Ambassador snare-side (tuned high, no muffling), clear Emperors on tom batters with clear Ambassadors on bottoms (medium-low tuning, no muffling), clear PowerStroke 3 on bass drum batter with FiberSkyn 3 on front (low tuning, Remo Muff'l against batter head)
Sticks: Zildjian John Tempesta model (black, hickory, and with wood tip)
Electronics: ddrums (for monitor mix only)
Microphones: various Shure models, E5 in-ear monitors

SIZE MATTERS

photo by Tim Cadiente

"I decided to move to larger drums. I did like the tightness of smaller-sized drums, but I wanted more power... just wanted to feel more air."

JOHN TEMPESTA
HELMET

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John Tempesta

MD: Although this new album represents an entirely different sound for Helmet, those who know the band's history immediately think of drummer John Stanier. Is it difficult stepping into a gig where you're automatically going to be compared to the previous drummer?

John: Yes, but I expected that because this isn't the first time I've been in this situation. When I was in Exodus I replaced Tom Hunting, who's a monster drummer. With both Testament and White Zombie I came in later and replaced the original drummer.

John Stanier is a great drummer, very powerful. I've always appreciated his work, and I'm sure people will compare us. But we're totally different players. Obviously there will be a lot of my style in there, but I'm definitely going to do John's playing justice, because I love his drumming and his parts.

Right now I'm learning the old Helmet stuff, and I can't wait to start jamming on those songs. I feel very confident about playing the band's back catalog. I also feel really good about the new record. The song arrangements and transitions and everything—it's all so cool. Live, we're going to play most of the new record, but it's good to have so much material so we can change things around every night. The band sounds really powerful, and I'm looking forward to going on the road.

MD: Helmet keeps you in the rock realm, but the music is miles away from the high-speed thrash metal you played with Exodus and Testament and the heavy sampling and programming identified with Rob Zombie. Did you apply any new techniques to recording *Size Matters*?

John: Actually, I went back to basics. I took away my second bass drum, went back to a single pedal, and simplified my whole drumkit. As much as I like to play double bass, it's cool to break away from that. I'm finding that I'm able to do a lot more with just one bass drum, without

HELMET HEAD

PAGE HAMILTON ON TEMPESTA

"You wouldn't normally think that some dude from Rob Zombie's band would sound good with what I'm doing," figures Helmet frontman Page Hamilton. "To me, that band was very tape-oriented, with loops and dance beats. But my friend Rene Mata [of Reach 454] knew I was looking for a drummer and told me, 'You've *got* to meet John Tempesta.'" Hamilton was intrigued enough to contact the drummer, and after bonding over a few beers, the two got together and jammed.

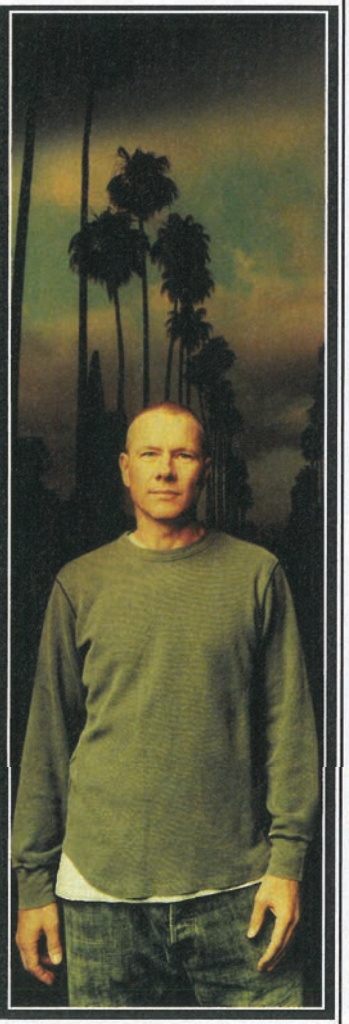
"I started throwing my style of grooves at John," Hamilton says, "and his feel was amazing. He'd also come up with different things, like play something against what I was doing. But the thing that was really amazing about John was his feel. He can really groove while playing heavy and hitting hard. If you play guitar, sing, and write songs, like I do, you can build a really good band around a great drummer. John and I have become the core of the band."

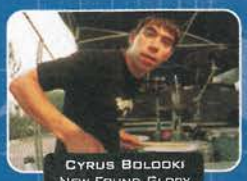
Hamilton also appreciated Tempesta's professionalism. "John is experienced and relatively calm," he says. "He's extremely responsible, meaning he cares about the music and that the drums sound good. I'm not a drummer, and I'm not going to come up with fills and drum parts. It's the drummer's responsibility to come up with the best part for the song and to offer a couple of options. John completely gets that.

"Another reason it's been a pleasure to work with John is that he's secure in his own ability," Hamilton continues. "He doesn't feel the need to argue for argument's sake. Some musicians have a bad habit of clinging to their ideas. John has never done that. He's very receptive in the studio and tries everything I ask him to."

Hamilton insists that having John in the studio for *Size Matters* took some pressure off of him. "John was conscientious about his playing, and he worked so hard," Page asserts. "I actually learned to trust somebody in the studio—and that was a change for me."

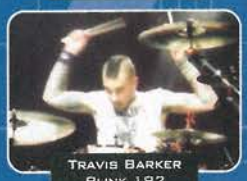
Gail Worley




Cyrus Bolooki
New Found Glory

Santa Clara Vanguard
Drum Corps

Jabo Starks
Clyde Stubblefield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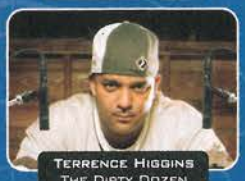
Stanton Moore
Galactic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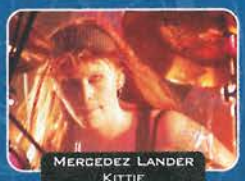
Mercedez Lander
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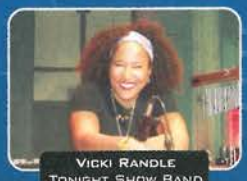
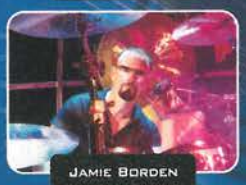
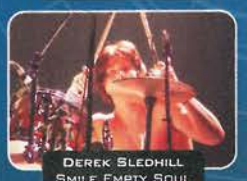

Vicki Randle
Tonight Show Band


Jamie Borden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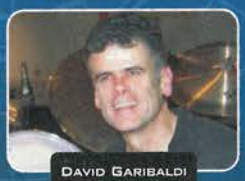
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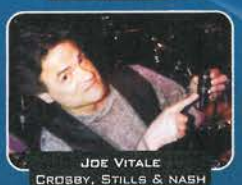
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John Tempesta

relying on the second one.

When I went in to record this album, I was feeling the influence of John Bonham. He had the whole package: power, dynamics, sound, and technique. When I did the demos with Helmet, I brought out my Bonham-sized kit, with a 26" bass drum. I wanted to get away from all the electronics and click tracks and just be raw and organic. It's a whole different element, which I'm really into right now.

On this record, there are fast- and slow-paced songs, and more *feel*. There are definitely a lot of dynamics involved within the songs, and it's really fun for me to play them. Sometimes Helmet will just lock into a groove, and it's the tightest possible thing—so simple, but so powerful.

On a song like "Throwing Punches," for example, the time signature is 5/4 but it has the feel of 4/4. Page has a degree in jazz and is an amazing musician. Just playing with him, I've learned so much about the development of music. He's helped me incorporate unusual time signatures, which I've never played in any other band, and I'm really adapting to that type of playing. In the long run I

TEMPESTA TRACKS

RECORDINGS

Artist	*Album*
Helmet	Size Matters
Exodus	Force Of Habit
Testament	Low
Testament	First Strike Still Deadly
White Zombie	Astro Creep 2000
Rob Zombie	Hell Billy Deluxe
Tony Iommi	Tony Iommi
Black Label Society	Hangover Music Vol. VI

FAVORITES

Artist	*Album*	*Drummer*
Led Zeppelin	all	John Bonham
Frank Zappa	Zappa In New York	Terry Bozzio
Jeff Beck	There And Back	Simon Phillips
Cozy Powell	Tilt	Cozy Powell
Tony MacAlpine	Edge Of Insanity	Steve Smith
David Bowie	Stage	Dennis Davis
Al Di Meola	Casino	Steve Gadd
Jethro Tull	Bursting Out	Barriemore Barlow
Tony Williams	Lifetime	Tony Williams
Black Sabbath	all	Bill Ward
Power Station	all	Tony Thompson
Pat Travers	all	Tommy Aldridge
Thin Lizzy	all	Brian Downey
Dio	all	Vinny Appice
U.K.	Live	Terry Bozzio
Soundgarden	Badmotorfinger	Matt Cameron
Rick Derringer	Sweet Evil	Vinny Appice
The Police	all	Stewart Copeland
Rush	A Farewell To Kings	Neil Peart

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Carlton Hunt Bad Manne
Carl Palmer E.L.P/As
Chuck Sabo Natalie Imbrugl
Derrick McKenzie Jamiroqu
Dave Mattacks Mary Chapin-Carpent
Liam Bradley Ronan Keatin
Gary Husband Independe
Charlie Morgan Independent/Elton Jo
Mel Gaynor Simple Min
Nick France Bill Withe
Andy Gangadeen Independe
Steve Barney Annie Lennox/Jeff Bec
Velroy Bailey Westlif
Jason Bowld Pitchshifte
Billy Doherty The Undertone
Kevin Morris Dr. Feelgoo
Smiley Robbie William
Chris Cano Independent/War
Andy Treacey Faithles
Craig Ellis Tygers of Pan Tan
Jorge Batista Basement Jax
Caroline Banks Seafoo
Gerry Conway Fairport Conventio
Inder Goldfinger Ian Brow
Geoff Dugmore Independe
Neal Wilkinson Independent/Kylie Minogu
Simon Moore Independent/Ian Brow
Billy Osborne Alexander O'Nea
Garry King Independe
Frank Zummo Independent/The Zo
Terry Sullivan Renaissanc
Laurie Jenkins Independent/Heather Nov
Carlos Hercules Belinda Carlisle/Beverly Knigh
Bobby Arechiga Stronghea
Tony Mason Independent/Matt Bianc
Aled Richards Catatoni
Nigel Glockler Saxo
Mark Roberts Massive Attac
Ian Thomas Independent /Tom Jone
Colin Woolway Suzi Quatr
Gary Whelan Happy Monday
John Marshall Soft Machine/Softwar
Mark Mondesir Independent/Courtney Pin
Adam Falkner Independe
Andrew McClean Sugababe
Geoff Dunn Van Morrison/Independe
Ryan Jenkinson This Gi
Julian Emery Enrique Englesia
Mike Joyce The Smith
Gary Wallis Pink Floyd/Independe
Albe Bonacci US Independe
Jay Micchiche Vacant Star
Peter Bengry Cornersho
Lea Mullen Independe
Noel Eccles The Corrs/Stin
Billy Hawn US Independe
Rogerio Jardim US Independe
Pete Newdeck Killer
Henry Spinetti Eric Clapton/ Bob Dyla
James Kottak The Scorpion
Paul Stewart Sophie Ellis-Bexte
Tony Bourke UK Independe
Simon Hanson Death in Vega
Jamie Little Ruby Turne
Tommy Aldridge Whitesnake
Max Beesley Robbie William
Allan Cox West End Show
Steve White Paul Welle
Andrew Small Massive Attack/Kyli
Sarah Sydow Far from Nowher
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think this experience will make me a better player.

MD: You play a few over-the-top tom fills on "Crashing Foreign Cars," which is very different from what you've done previously. Why did you choose to do that?

John: I was thinking of Ian Paice's playing on Deep Purple's "Burn," so I brought a little taste of his playing into it—but a little bit faster, obviously. [laughs] That's one of the last songs Chris and I wrote for the record, and we wanted to do something fast and heavy. The way those fills lead into the chorus brings more excitement to the song. That's one of my favorite tracks on the record.

MD: Where were your drum tracks recorded?

John: The main tracks were recorded at Cello Studios in Hollywood. They have a big, beautiful drum room there. It was awesome for me, because I had all of these drums. And since the room was so big, I wanted to set up two kits. I had a small, tight kit, with a 22" bass drum. I also wanted to have my big John Bonham setup, to take advantage of that big room sound. That didn't really work out, but my friend Billy Pulaski, who's been my drum tech in the past, came down and brought some other drums from my locker that I haven't used in years. We just started messing around and experimenting with different sounds, and all of a sudden it was like, "Oh man, let's get that baby up and going!" The room was really amazing.

MD: Did you use any special mic's or miking techniques to get that punchy sound out of your snare?

John: For recording I used a Lars Ulrich model bell-brass snare. We had Shure 57s top and bottom, and we wound up using an AKG 414 on the side, just to get more crack from the body of the shell. It's definitely a different approach, but it worked and it picked up the sound, because that snare is so ringy and it sings so much.

MD: When you were a drum tech for Anthrax, did you pick up any playing tips from Charlie Benante?

John: Oh, absolutely. I know Charlie from high school. He's just incredible, and his playing is effortless. I'll watch that guy play all night and he won't even break a sweat on stage. He definitely helped me out with how to approach thrash metal, because I wasn't that type of drummer. I learned so much from Charlie about double bass and how to improve my speed and accuracy. A lot of what I learned from Charlie has allowed me to get involved with this type of music.

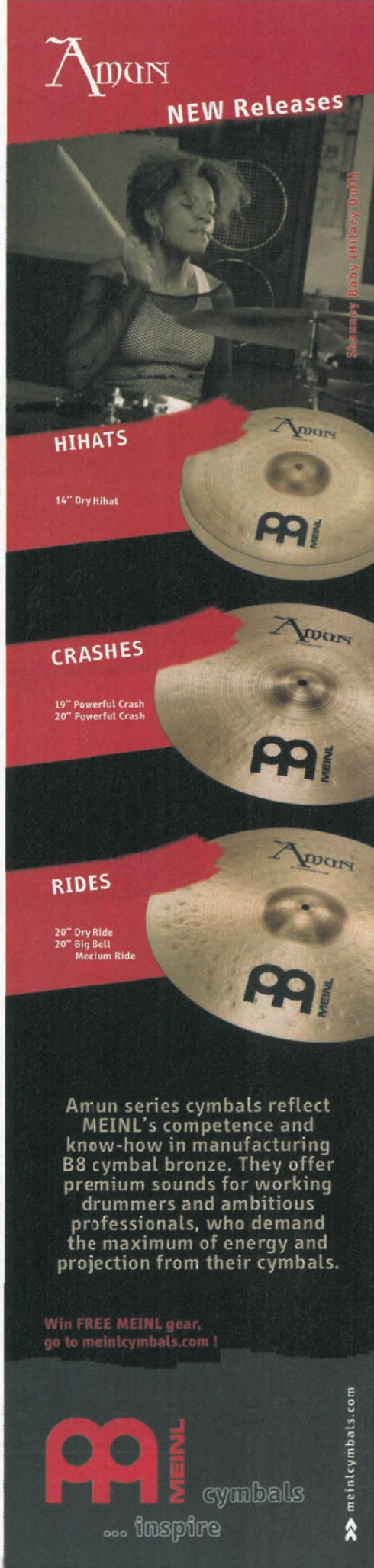
MD: In Helmet you've also got former Anthrax bassist Frank Bello as your rhythm section partner. Is there already a shared sensibility or vibe between you two?

John: Oh, yeah. Frank and I also went to high school together, and we were in the school jazz band. We recently recorded the song "Wrathchild" for an Iron Maiden tribute record. That track is one of the best Maiden songs *ever*. I brought Frank into that project because he's a big Steve Harris head. We used to jam on "Wrathchild" in jazz class way back in the day.

MD: What drummers have most influenced you at different points in your career?

John: How many times have you heard this: When I was a kid I saw *A Hard Day's Night* on TV and I was like, "I want to be Ringo Starr!" Growing up, John Bonham was one of the first drummers who *really* inspired me. I remember learning "Black Dog" and being so excited because I *thought* I nailed it. In 1977 a neighbor took me to my first concert, which was David Bowie. That's where I first saw Dennis Davis play. I was sitting at the side of the stage so I could watch him, and at the time I thought he was like Billy Cobham. He was *amazing*. He's such a soulful groove player, but he's also a total rock drummer—and progressive on top of that. He had that real deep-funk, in-the-pocket playing style.

Years later, I met Dennis when White Zombie did *The David Letterman Show*. I ran into a friend backstage who said to me, "Johnny, did you ever meet Dennis?" He turned around and it was Dennis Davis, and my jaw just dropped. I was like, "Oh my god, you were the first guy I ever saw play live and one of my biggest influences!" The following



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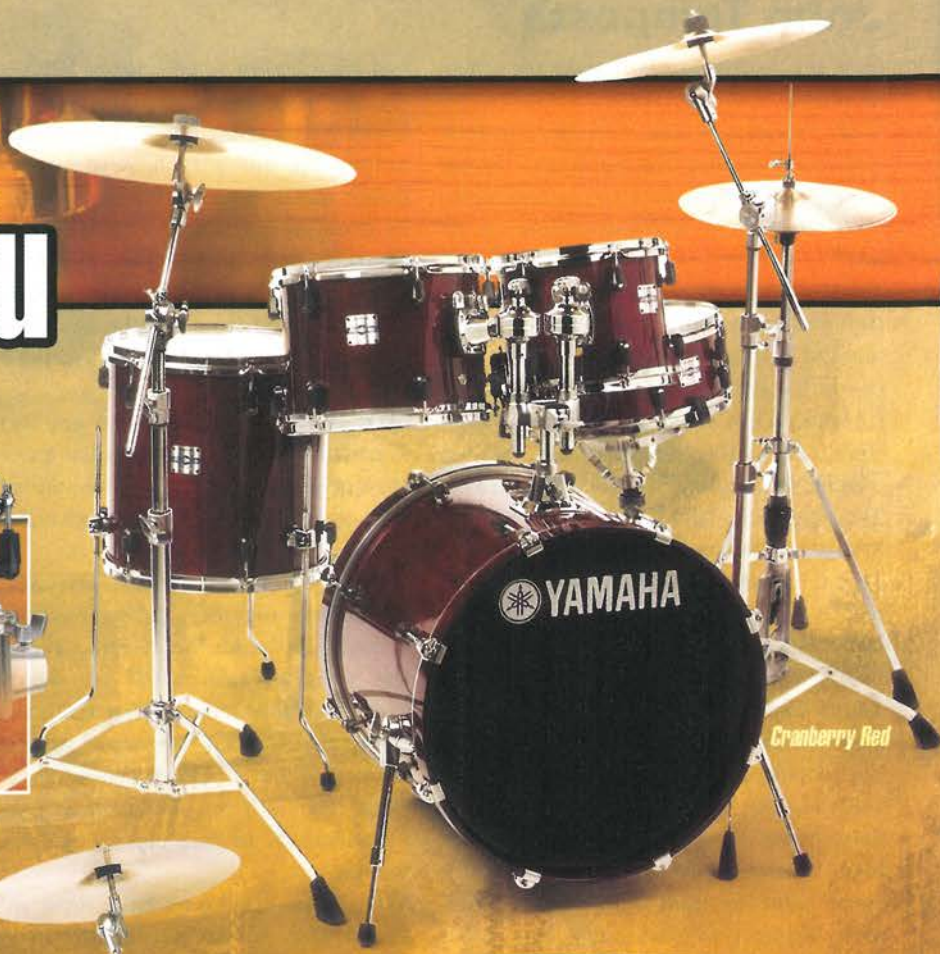

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month we were playing Roseland in New York, and Dennis came to the show. As I was walking down the dressing room stairs to say hello to everyone after the show, I opened the door and there was Dennis Davis, bowing to me. I almost passed out. [laughs]

Later I got into progressive rock and fusion, so Terry Bozzio was another big influence. When I got more into metal, Charlie Benante turned me on to Robb Reiner from the band Anvil. In the pre-Metallica '80s, I would have to say that Reiner was one of the first fast double bass guys, along with Stefan Kaufmann from Accept, Dave Lombardo, Tom Hunting, and Philthy Animal Taylor from Motörhead.

MD: You've moved around between a few different bands in your career. Have you ever had to choose between staying with a group of guys you like and moving to another band to further your career?

John: I did have to move on when I was in Testament, and that was a big thing for me. We'd just finished mixing the *Low* record when the White Zombie gig came up. A friend of mine worked for the band and knew they were looking for a drummer. I'd always liked their music, so I auditioned and got the gig.

I really wanted to evolve in a different musical direction at the time, to move away from thrash and into something new and fresh. It was a great opportunity, so I decided to take it. Playing for Zombie was also easier, because I lived in LA, whereas Testament was based in San Francisco and I always had to commute back and forth. I went about leaving Testament in a cool way, though, and I recommended Jon Dette, who replaced me in the band. Everyone was happy and we're friends to this day. Last year I went on tour with them.

MD: In 2001 you played on the Testament album *First Strike Still Deadly*, a re-recording of classic Testament material from the band's first two albums. How did you approach reworking drum parts by drummer Louie Clemente?

John: I like Louie's playing, and I thought he came up with some really clever parts on the original recordings. During the sessions for *First Strike,* Eric [Peterson, guitarist] and I worked on different arrangements to change things up, but we didn't want to change the structure of the songs too much. We made them a bit faster, or we added more double bass to make some songs more interesting. Louie didn't really do that much double bass; he was more about fills, but it was real tasty stuff. I just added a lot more double bass, because you've *got* to have double bass in metal. [laughs] Right now I'm practicing in the studio with a double pedal, because lugging two bass drums around gets expensive. But for thrash metal, you've got to have two bass drums.

MD: How does your organic drumming meld with sampling/sequencing/click tracks, and what effect does that have on your playing?

John: That's really never had any effect at all. The programming Zombie used was on tape and ran in the background. I played to a click track, and once you get used to that it's just in the back of your head. The more accustomed I got to the click, the softer I would put it in my headphones. Eventually it didn't feel like I was playing to tape or anything. Then I could just let it rip.

MD: Did you ever face any challenges when something didn't trigger or go off on time?

John: Oh, yeah. The one big thing that happened, of course, happened on live TV, when White Zombie played "More Human Than Human" on the MTV Music Awards. We couldn't use our own sound guy, because we had to use their union people, and I never got a send for my click track.

Now, when you're playing live, you obviously can't stop. [laughs] But when the song started off, I was waiting for the click track to come in, and there *was* no click. I started to panic, because millions of people were watching. I couldn't stop, though and I couldn't hear anything because we had hardly any monitors. I just kept playing and thinking, "just keep it together," but it was a little bit off. Oh man, I still don't even like to talk about it. It felt like an *eternity* up there.

The guys in the band had no idea it was going on, because *they* didn't hear it

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either. They were jumping around, going crazy. By the end of the song, I almost kicked my drumkit over. But malfunctions can and do happen when you use machines. It's just unfortunate that it happened on live TV.

MD: You're known for your precision and accuracy as a live performer. Can you offer some playing tips for developing speed and accuracy?

John: When I practice double bass, I'll sit there without sticks in my hands, with a metronome, and just do singles and doubles. Then I'll alternate between my feet and my hands. I like leading with my left foot doing 16th notes, and then doing different patterns with my right foot.

I have the hi-hat stand very close to my left pedal, and in the last couple of years, I picked up this technique where I'm able to plant my foot sideways and play the hi-hat and left bass drum pedals at the same time. It's a cool effect.

As far as building speed goes, it helps to work with a click and start off really slowly until you get your feel, then build yourself up to as fast as you can get it. It's all about patience and just keeping everything you do very clean and very pronounced.

MD: We talked about your studio gear, but have your equipment needs changed over the years in terms of the number, size, and style of drums you play live?

John: Not really. As far as drum sizes, it's stayed pretty much the same. I've always played 24" bass drums. For recording, I have this amazing Tama Bubinga wood kit with 22s, which are really punchy for more of the fast, thrash metal. But I've always liked the bigger sound I get out of a 24". My setup for Helmet is similar to my Zombie setup, except I'm only using one bass drum. Since I was seventeen I had two kick drums, two toms, and two floor toms, and about ten or twelve cymbals. I love *lots* of cymbals. They're very loud; guitar players hate them. [laughs]

MD: Are you very specific about your seating height and position?

John: I like to have my legs level to the kick drum and my elbows parallel to the snare. I'm right in the middle of everything, and I like to sit a little bit lower just so I can get more power from my feet on the kick. I can't sit high. I don't understand how some guys are almost standing when they play.

MD: You use Remo's Emperor X snare drum head. What do you like about that head, and why is it particularly well suited to your style of drumming?

John: That's a great head that Mike Fasano designed. I did some R&D on that head while on tour, because I was hitting pretty hard with Zombie, and I use big sticks as well. I was using regular CS heads, which are amazing, but they just weren't holding up enough for live playing. Then they came up with this version of the Emperor with the thicker dot, this X head, which is incredible. I've never played a head that was so durable. I can get through two shows with one, compared to going through a head every three songs before. I've played Emperor heads since I was a kid because I've always played pretty hard and I need the durability.

MD: How specific are you about the tension of your drumheads?

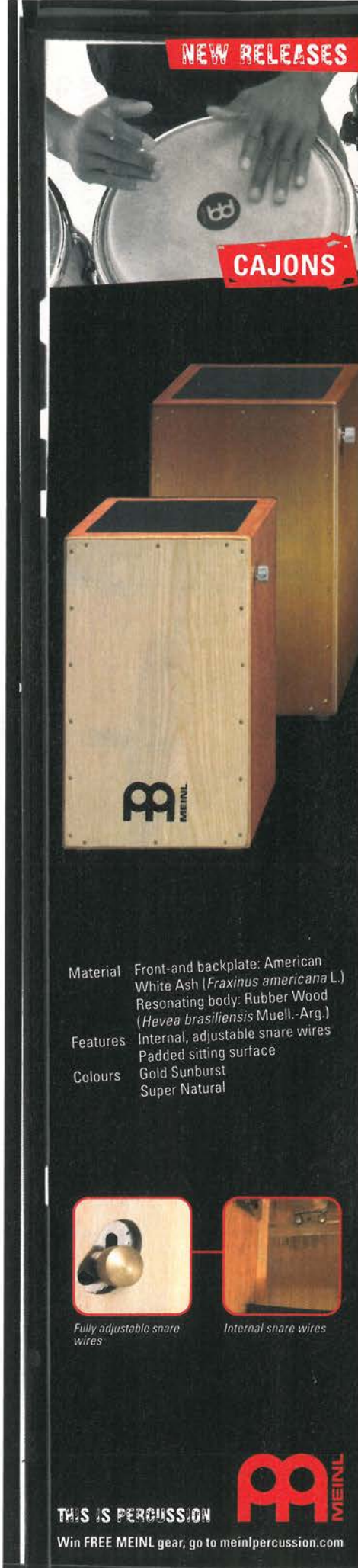
John: I like to tune them low. With the Bubinga wood drums I'm playing now, the shells are very thick and they have a lot of low end, so I can tune them up a little bit higher. I like to get the slap out of the drum—a lot of the lows and mid lows. The kick drum is tuned fairly low as well.

With the kick I have now, I don't have anything inside it. I just tune it down and it's *really* punchy. The wood on these Tama drums has a lot to do with my tuning. It's almost like the drums tune themselves; I just put the head on and it's, "Alright, let's go!" [laughs]

MD: How about the placement and positioning of the drums and cymbals?

John: I can be really picky sometimes, because I like everything to be symmetrical, especially if I'm behind a double bass drumkit. The cymbals have to be *perfectly even* on each side, all the cymbals the same on the right as on the left. Every once in a while, everything will be perfectly set up and then my drum tech will get annoyed with me because I have to move something one millimeter. But it means a lot to me that it's exact.

MD: How loose or tight do you keep your cymbals on the stands, and what are



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your reasons for doing so?

John: Obviously you need to have the cymbals so that they don't go flying everywhere. Tama has these nylon bushings on the top of their stands, so you can have them tight or a little loose and still lock them into place. I like a lot of sway, though I do like my ride tight. I think the more the cymbal gives, the less likely you are to crack it. When I was younger, I'd have my cymbals so tight that I used to crack them like crazy. I'm getting better, though. [laughs] I'm not lightening up; I'm just playing better cymbals.

MD: Please go into detail about your bass drum pedal tension.

John: I like it pretty tight. When I was playing the thrash stuff, I would go as tight as I possibly could, just to get all the give out of it. I've been noticing lately that I'm still going fairly tight, but not all the way up, since I'm not playing so much fast stuff. I'm also putting my beater a little bit further back so I can get more power out of it, because I like to plant that baby right on the head. It's weird, though, because when I'm practicing I'll play flat-footed, but I'll play heel-up when I'm playing live. I just get the most power out of it when I'm locking right into it heel-up, especially with the Helmet stuff.

MD: What is your monitoring situation like?

John: I endorse Shure microphones and monitors, and I use the E5s in my ears. I also use these subwoofers called Thumpers on the throne. With Zombie I had so many monitors; even though I had the in-ears and the subs on the seat, I also had PA speakers behind me. I just wanted to feel it, you know?

For my monitor mix, I mostly like guitar, with a little bit of vocals. For the drums, I like a lot of kick and snare, obviously, then toms. I had a really good mix on the last Zombie tour because I did it myself. My drum riser was eight feet off the ground, so I could never see anybody, and I figured, It might be best if I do my own mix from up here. So I had my own 16-channel Mackie board. With the clicks and the loops, I could do different mixes within different songs, which was cool. I also used these new overhead mic's from Shure, the KSM44s. I would mix a little bit of the overheads in my in-ears to get that ambient sound from the crowd. It was *awesome*.

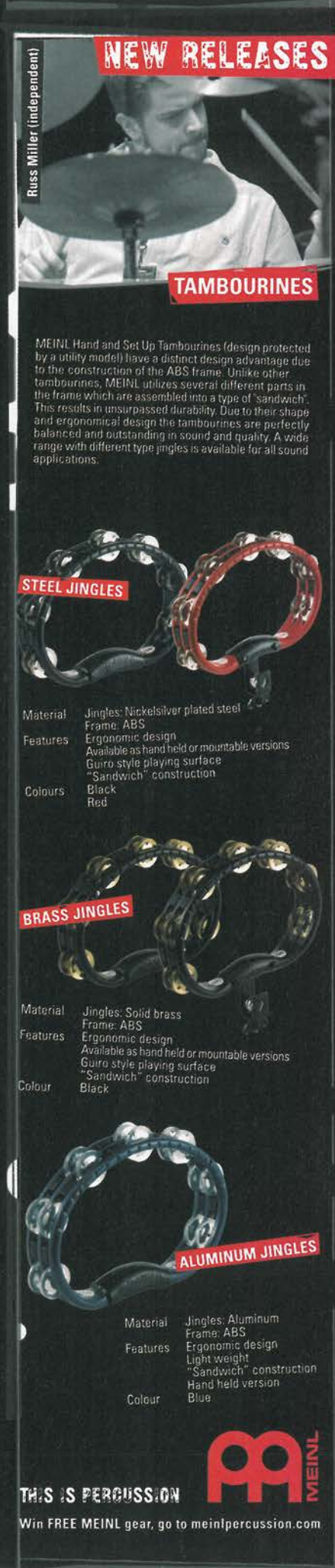
MD: I understand that you've done a few drum clinics, some of which were in other countries. What were those like?

John: That's always a thrill for me. It was especially thrilling to be asked to do Zildjian Day in Moscow. When I flew over there I was like, "What the hell am I doing?" [laughs] I got off the plane and it was *freezing* cold. But the people took such great care of me, and it was just a great experience. There are some incredible local Russian drummers over there as well. I also went to Australia two years in a row and did a couple of clinics down there. That was amazing. The first time around I was able to bring my drum tech, Clint Letulier. We had a blast and made a lot of great friends.

When I prepare for a clinic I put everything I'm going to play to on DAT. I'll play a whole medley of White Zombie songs, a couple of Testament songs, and now I have Helmet songs in the arsenal. Then I'll talk and take questions. To end everything, I'll do a freestyle drum solo for ten minutes. And playing in front of different people around the world is really very gratifying, because everyone appreciates music. Doing clinics has also given me the chance to play with some great drummers, like Dave Weckl, Virgil Donati, John Blackwell, Chad Wackerman, and Dom Famularo.

I've had amazing opportunities in my career to do some really cool things and tour with people I've always admired. There are so many great players out there, so I feel I've been very lucky and blessed. I always tell the kids who come to my clinics that you can be the most talented person, but timing really is everything. Going out and meeting people, going to shows, and just being involved is crucial to building a career. When your name gets around, *that's* when things happen.

MD Radio
To hear John Tempesta and Helmet, tune in to MD Radio at www.moderndrummer.com.



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Modern Drummer's Bass Drum Supplement

This month *Modern Drummer* looks long and hard at the biggest—and baddest—part of the drumset, the bass drum.

In this special supplement we explore *every* aspect of the kick. First we explore bass drum design and construction—including the extreme sizes being used by artists today. Later we dig deep into bass drum heads, beaters, microphones, accessories, and educational materials. Then we've got some excellent technique and conceptual pieces that are sure to help you fine-tune your foot chops. Finally, don't miss our unique inspection of wild bass drum head artwork and the companies who create those amazing designs.

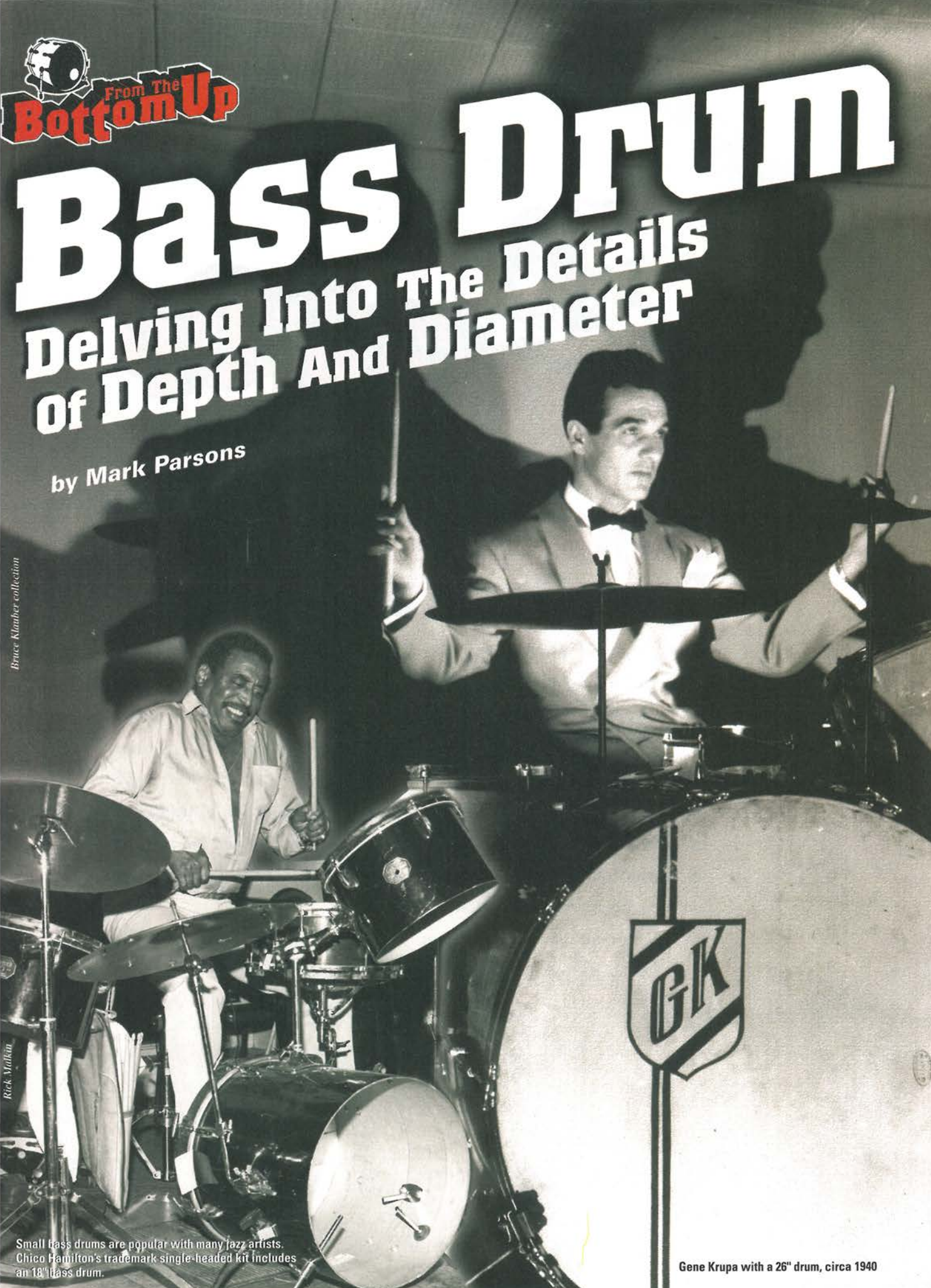
Everything you want to know about bass drums? You bet!

From The Bottom Up

Bass Drum

Delving Into The Details Of Depth And Diameter

by Mark Parsons



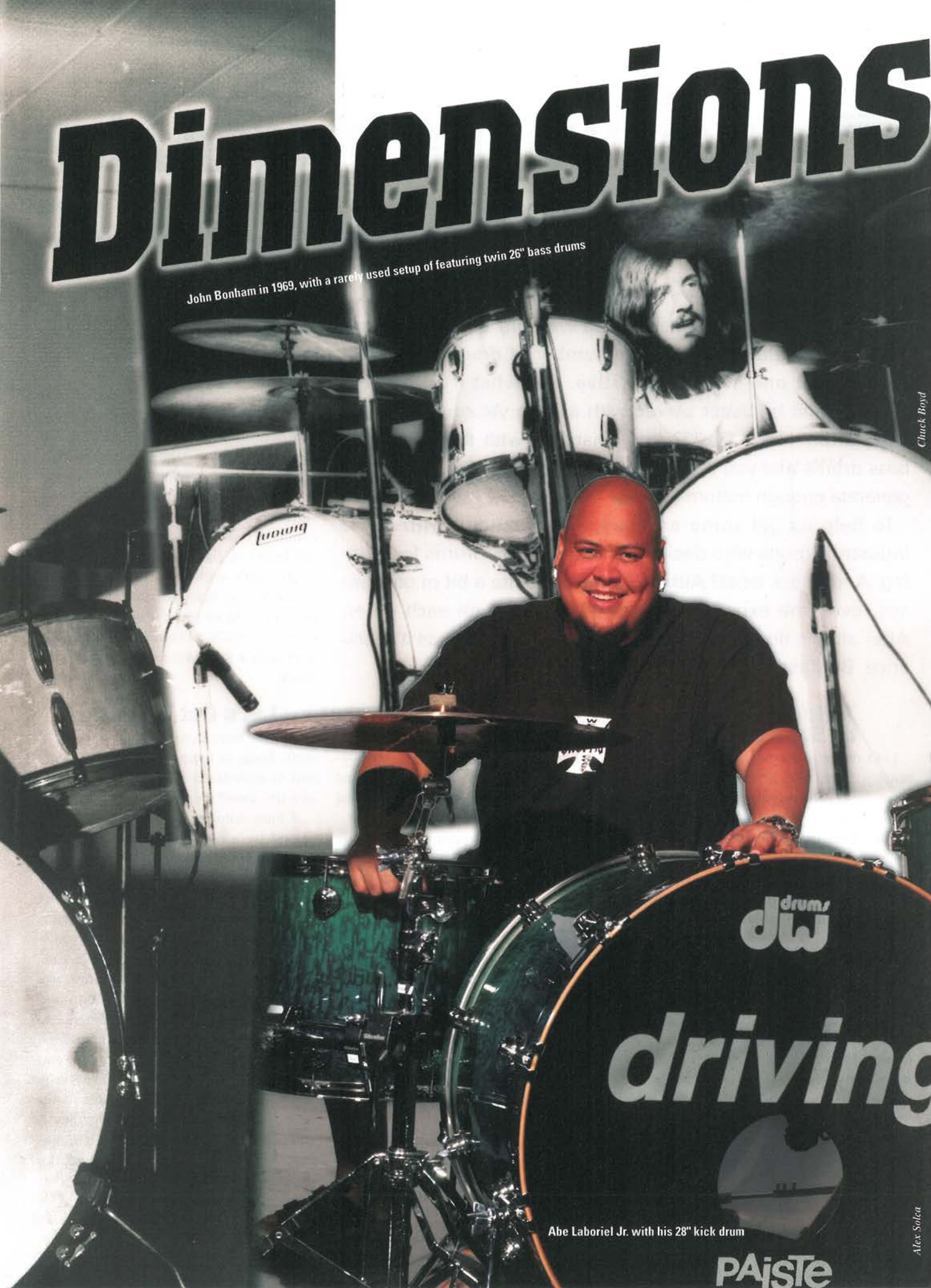
Bruce Klauber collection

Rick Mattingly

Small bass drums are popular with many jazz artists. Chico Hamilton's trademark single-headed kit includes an 18" bass drum.

Gene Krupa with a 26" drum, circa 1940

Dimensions



John Bonham in 1969, with a rarely used setup of featuring twin 26" bass drums

Chuck Boyd

Abe Laboriel Jr. with his 28" kick drum

Alex Solca

So you want a bigger kick or a tighter sound...or

Should you go with a large diameter, say a 24" or even a 26" drum? Judging from the way big bass drums are selling lately, apparently a number of drummers would answer that one in the affirmative. But what if your sonic needs would be better served with a deep yet conventionally sized drum, like a 16x22? And what's up with those little 18" bass drums that you also see a lot these days? Can they really generate enough bottom to cover the job?

To help us get some answers, we consulted with some industry experts who design, build, and prep drums for a living. And guess what? Although there is quite a bit of consensus, even the experts don't always agree with each other. After all this time, drum design is still as much art as it is science. But first, a bit of history.

A Brief History Of Bass Drums

Let's return to the early days of the 20th century. Back then, a "bass drum" meant an orchestral or marching drum, both of which were of modest depth but much greater diameter than current bass drums. When the first really practical bass drum pedal was invented in 1909, it was mounted on the existing drums of the times. Bass drums on drumsets stayed large and shallow for the next forty or so years, for a couple of reasons. First, musical styles didn't go through as frequent and radical changes in the first half of the 20th century as they did in the latter half. Therefore the drive for a different sound wasn't a major design force. Second, drumset miking wasn't yet in existence. So big drums were needed simply to meet volume requirements.

This all changed in the decades following World War II, as the popular big dance bands gave way to smaller musical groups. The need to be heard over a large band was no longer a primary design element. At the same time, drummers—especially the more experimental ones playing in bop groups—were looking for something new. They found it in the tight, punchy articulation afforded by smaller (18" and 20") bass drums.

When rock started to dominate the music scene, the same basic "combo" kits were used—small bass drums and all. But drummers soon started to desire bigger sounds from their kick drums (and perhaps more visual appeal). So 22" and 24" diameters became standard. Interestingly, throughout most of this evolution, not much thought was given to bass drum *depth*. Irrespective of diameter, the vast majority of bass drums up until the mid-1970s were 14" deep, with some being only 12". Somewhere after that point this standard was bumped up to 16", where it stayed for almost twenty years.

So where does that leave us today? Seemingly going in both directions at once, with the aforementioned recent popularity of both big kicks (especially as part of Bonham-esque four-piece drumsets) and little bop-sized bass drums on risers. But the ubiquitous 16x22 is still hanging in there, with the majority of entry-level imported sets offering that size.

Although the bigger and smaller bass drums represent current micro-trends, most experienced drummers have realized that there simply *is* no standard anymore—and what a wonderful thing that is! Whatever works for their musical taste and playing situation is the drum to use. So now we commonly see bass drums ranging from 16" to 26" in diameter, with depths of 14" to 20" (with shallower and deeper models available from many boutique manufacturers). In light of these almost unlimited options, what's a drummer to do? Let's start with a look into the physics of bass drums.

Let's Get Physical

Okay...here comes some scientific stuff. Hang in there, because it's important to understand *how* a bass drum creates the sound it does.

A bass drum is a cylindrical chamber closed by a resonating membrane (the drumhead) on each end. Striking one of the membranes drives a column of air toward the other membrane, which starts to vibrate a very short time later—generally on the order of one to two milliseconds. These membranes are tunable, and when excited they vibrate at a fixed frequency, which is determined by the tension placed on the membranes. If the membranes are tensioned the same and are of the same weight, they'll yield the same pitch. This arrangement generally gives the most volume. If the membranes are tensioned differently, they'll each vibrate at a different pitch, combining to create the sonic output of the drum. This arrangement generally gives a more complex sound.

drum sound... a punchier sound?

In reality, things are rarely this clear-cut. The characteristics of the batter and resonant heads will *not* be equal. The batter head will contribute more to the drum's sound than the resonant head will. The proportion that each head contributes will vary with the depth of the drum, the type of head, and the impact with which the batter head is struck. The waveform of the struck head will have a very steep leading edge (a sharper attack), while the resonant head will have a somewhat slower attack, giving a bit more expansion or "bloom" to the sound.

Additionally, the heads may be of different weights. They may have built-in dampening rings that reduce certain overtones and change the fundamental pitch. And those dampening rings may be different for the batter head and resonant head. One or both of the heads may be vented. And finally, there's a third vibrating part of the system that also contributes to the overall sound: the drumshell itself.

As you can see, there are lots of variables here. This explains why every drummer's bass drum sound is unique. (And we didn't even get into how the same drum will sound radically different in different acoustic environments.) To eliminate these variables from the equation and give you a fighting chance at making sense out of all the dimensional options available, we're going to isolate the effects of diameter and depth. We'll look at how these factors affect things near and dear to your heart, such as pitch, decay, tone, projection, sensitivity, pedal performance, and that elusive yet all-important thing known as "feel."

Assisting us will be a panel of industry gurus that includes Bob Gatzen, Gene Okamoto, and Ross Garfield. Gatzen is a drum designer, recording engineer, and producer, and the creator of the DrumFrame (among other drumming inventions). Okamoto is the resident drum wizard and technical answer-man at Pearl drums. Garfield is the guy behind Drum Doctors—a first-call provider of studio drumset rentals, teching and tuning, and expert repair services.

Diametrically Speaking

You'd think that a bass drum with a large diameter would always give you a deeper fundamental. And it's true that from a purely physical viewpoint, as the diameter goes up, the *capability* to achieve a lower pitch also goes up. But other factors are involved.

"The obvious observation with pitch," says Ross Garfield, "is that as the head diameter increases, the pitch of the drum goes down. But it largely depends on the tuning. That is to say, I could tune a 22" drum lower than a 24". But the 24" would be *easier* to tune at the lower pitch."

Gene Okamoto agrees, citing a good analogy: "In my years in retail," he says, "I explained these relationships to customers many times by relating to other, similar things. I found that comparing drums to tubes on pipe organs worked particularly well. On pipe organs, the longest and largest-diameter tube produces the lowest note. Bass drums work like this too. A large and deep drum can produce a lower note."

courtesy of Pearl

The 16x22 bass drum on this Pearl Export EX kit represents the standard size for most contemporary "packaged" drum outfits.

Bob Gatzen concurs, but makes the distinction between the *pitch* of the fundamental and the *strength* of it. "A large-diameter drum will produce a lower fundamental pitch," says Bob. "But you'll actually get *more* fundamental from a smaller-diameter head. The larger the diameter—the more surface area of the head—the less obvious the fundamental pitch becomes. If you compare a 10" tom and a 16" tom, the fundamental will be more apparent on the smaller drum. These things also apply to bass drums—as the diameters get bigger, you get less fundamental."

Percussion-equipment designer and tuning authority Bob Gatzen

"Again, most people would think that tone is a function of size," says Ross Garfield, speaking about the fundamental. "But it's reversed—an 18" drum would have *more* tone than a 26" drum. I want to clarify that I'm using the term 'tone' to describe the note of the shell, not the pitch of the drum."

Ross Garfield, owner of LA's Drum Doctors cartage service

What About Volume?

So we've established that (with everything else being equal) larger drums can produce a lower fundamental pitch, but smaller drums will have a higher ratio of the fundamental to the partials. But is volume also a matter of size? In the main, yes.

"From a physics standpoint, you'll move more air with a larger drum," says Bob Gatzen. "Think of a 30" symphonic drum and how powerful it sounds. The first drumset players used large drums too, because they weren't miked, and they needed the volume. However, that doesn't apply as much in a miking situation, because the mic' is usually *in* the drum."

Ross Garfield thinks that projection is also likely a function of drum depth. "Acoustic projection is probably proportional to the length of the shell. But if the drum's being miked, who cares?"

How Much Is Enough?

Can a bass drum be *too* big to function effectively? Sure. A larger drum takes more energy to excite the membranes, and at some point there isn't enough energy in the pedal beater to make things work efficiently. This happens equally with overly large and overly deep drums, but for different reasons.

"There's a point of diminishing returns for both depth and diameter when going large," says Gene Okamoto. "If the drum is too deep, it will take a huge amount—if not an *impossible* amount—of force to move air from one end to the other. If the drum gets too large in diameter, the sound will probably be subsonic, the response will be slow, and it will take a mighty player and a pedal with a *long* beater to get it to sound. So bass drums are sized the way they are for practical reasons."

Pearl product specialist Gene Okamoto

Bob Gatzen is not a fan of "standard" drum sizes. "Over the years," he says, "22" bass drums have become the standard. That may actually be kind of a bad thing. I think 22" heads are sluggish, and they have a more limited tuning range. It comes back to physics: You can't get the head vibrating fast because it doesn't move the air fast enough. If you tune the head loose, you get a 'slappy' tone. You can bring it up maybe a quarter of a turn and get some resonance, but anything higher than that makes the drum sound 'boingy.' Because of this, I hardly ever use a 22" bass drum anymore. I'm more often

What Does What?

Here's a quick reference chart that outlines the effects that drum sizes have on acoustic performance and playing feel. Remember that these are generalities, and that individual characteristics will depend on the specific drum, head choice, your playing style, and other variables.

Drum Dimension	Effect
Larger Diameter	Lower Fundamental
Smaller Diameter	Stronger Fundamental
Larger Diameter	More *potential* volume (if pitch is high enough to register)
Smaller Diameter	Less potential volume (although may have more punch due to midrange)
Larger Diameter	Narrower useable tuning range
Smaller Diameter	Broader useable tuning range
Larger Diameter	Slower/softer pedal performance
Smaller Diameter	Faster/firmer pedal performance
Deeper Depth	More sonic "girth" to sound (assuming enough pedal energy to drive air column)
Shallower Depth	Less potential "girth" to sound
Deeper Depth	Less sensitivity
Shallower Depth	Greater sensitivity
Deeper Depth	More "bloom" (sound builds more slowly)
Shallower Depth	Drum speaks more quickly
Deeper Depth	More *potential* projection (assuming enough pedal energy to drive air column)
Shallower Depth	Less potential projection
Large and Deep	Slower overall sonic and mechanical response; looser sound
Small and Shallow	Faster overall sonic and mechanical response; tighter sound

between 16" and 20" now. I saw Phil Collins in concert recently with an 18" bass drum, and it sounded unbelievable."

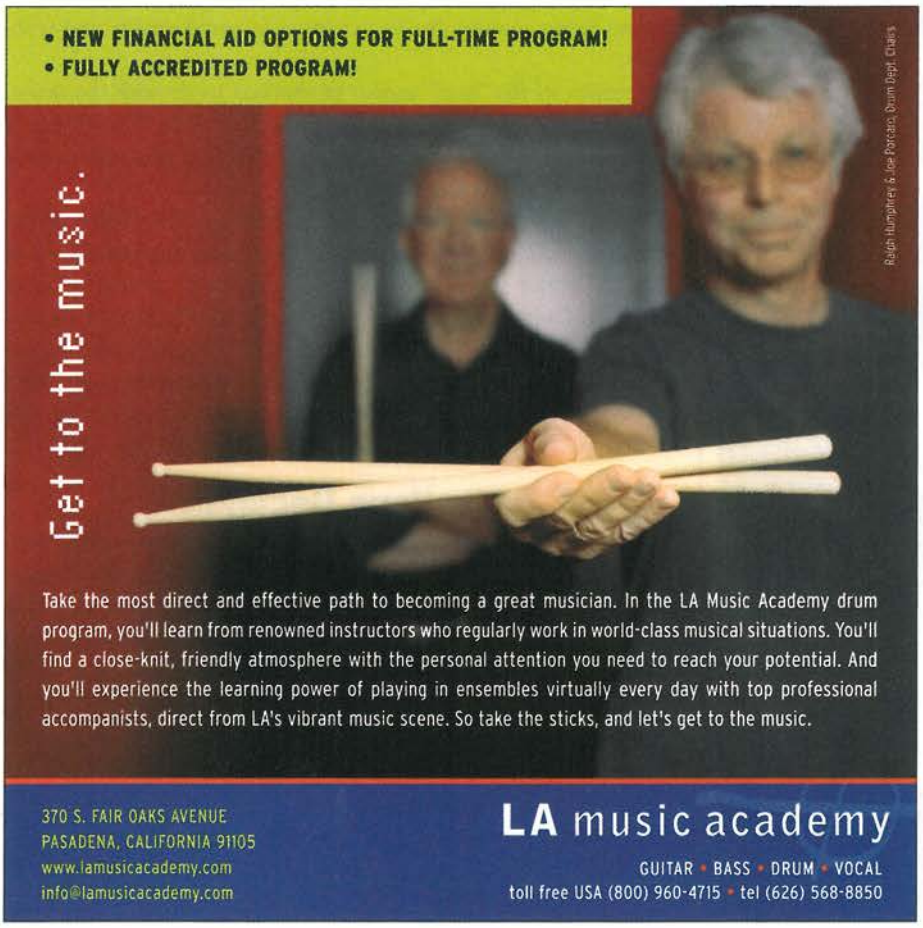
A Matter Of Some Depth

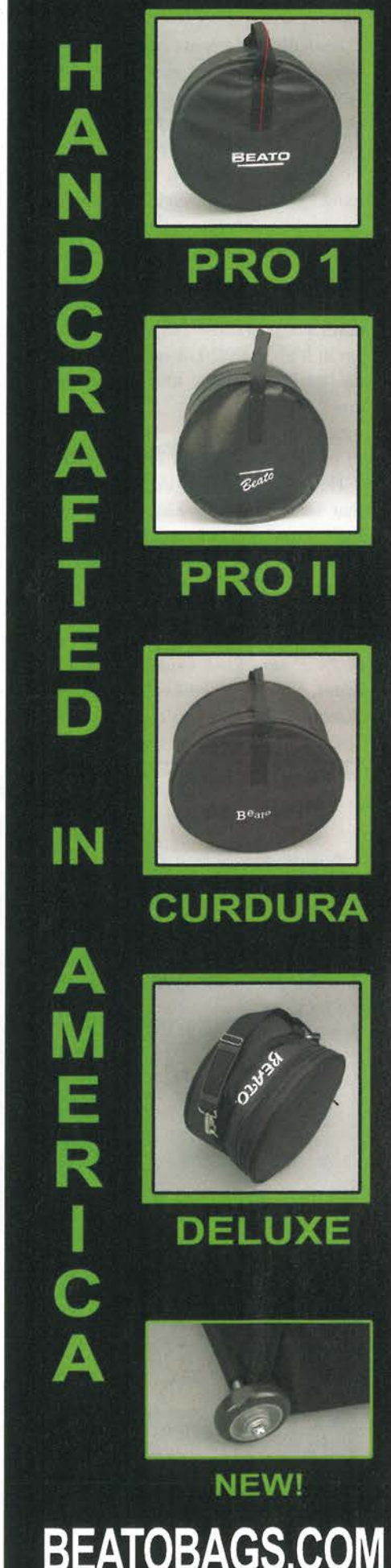
What about the length of our "cylindrical resonant chamber"? Does it also affect the pitch? Yes...to a degree. But the effect isn't as much on the *frequency* of the note as it is on the "equalization." Listen to a bass drum (or bass guitar) track on your stereo, and turn up the bass tone control. The note sounds bigger and deeper, but the actual pitch hasn't changed. The lower partials have been increased, adding weight to the sound. A similar thing happens when a bass drum's depth is increased. But here, too, there are tradeoffs, as Gene Okamoto explains.

"If you take 22"-diameter bass drums in 14", 16", and 18" depths," says Gene, "the deeper one will have the potential to sound lower than the rest. However, the air has to travel farther to reach the resonator head, so the drum's response will be relatively slower than that of the others. Also, it will take more energy to propel the air column to reach the resonator head in order to achieve a full sound. The shallower drums will respond to a lighter hit, and will thus be more sensitive."

This means that the ability to make full use of a drum's depth depends on the drummer's playing style—and results may vary widely, as Ross Garfield found out. "I've experimented with many shell depths, and I've found that there is the law of diminishing returns in effect. For example, a 14x22 may have just as much low end as a 16x22 or even an 18x22, and I find that a 16x24 may have *more* low end than an 18x24. It doesn't seem logical, but that's my evaluation."

But how about responsiveness? As Gene Okamoto alluded to, longer drums are both slower and less sensitive. Bob Gatzen elaborates on this subject: "The shallower the depth, the more responsive the drum, because there's less delay between the contact of the beater with the head and the actual drum sounding. Think of snare drums. What's the difference between a 14" piccolo and a 7x14 snare? It's the delay. So my usual advice to people with longer bass drums is to hit the drum *hard*."





If shallower drums offer such great responsiveness, what's the benefit of going with a deeper drum? It's that "tone control" thing we mentioned earlier. Assuming you aren't shy about putting some force behind your pedal, you can get a thicker, deeper sound with a longer shell.

"A larger depth will make the drum feel as if it has more 'girth,' more weight to the sound," Gatzen says. "A choice like this has a lot to do with a particular drummer's listening habits. Does he or she listen to the stereo with the treble up and the bass down, or vice versa? Don't be afraid to buy a 20" bass drum, but if you do, don't get a 14x20—there's not enough volume of air. I'd get at least a 16x20. A really good size is a 17x20, if you can find a company that'll make drums to your custom sizes."

Taking things to the extreme for the sake of compactness, the Canopus Club Kit combines a 7x10 rack tom and a 12x13 floor tom with a 12x15 bass drum.

Feelings

How does all this relate to the internal comfort level that we feel when we sit down and begin to play a new bass drum? On this question, our experts are in agreement about one thing: You'll get faster pedal response from a small-diameter drum than from a larger one. But is that necessarily better? Again, it depends.

"An 18" drum is going to have more response than a 20", 22", or 24"," says Ross Garfield. "That means you'll be able to play faster, with more strokes. But that doesn't mean it will feel better than a 26" drum if you're playing 'When The Levee Breaks.'"

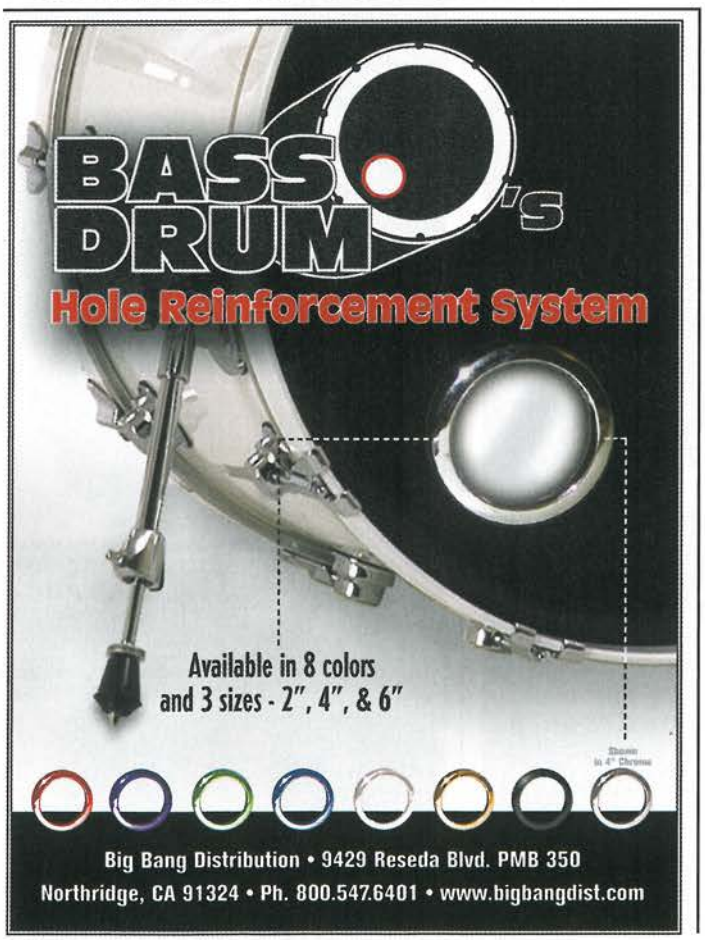
Gene Okamoto puts feel over sonic considerations also. "I've always liked the feel of '70s-era single-headed bass drums with a packing blanket and a brick pressed against the batter head," he says. "The rebound was quick and precise—much like a practice pad. Of course, the drum *sounded* like one too. With today's self-muffled heads and open tuning, bass drums feel mushier than their highly padded '70s counterparts. Nevertheless, players are playing faster mainly due to advances in pedal design and technique."

So much of the "feel" aspect of this has to do with the drummer's personal style and what he or she is used to. There may be times when, for example, the fastest rebound possible simply *isn't* the best for you and how you play.

"Feel is a subjective area," agrees Bob Gatzen. "Some drummers like a 22" bass drum with a loose head because they can slam the beater into it and it doesn't chatter or bounce all over the place. On smaller bass drums, it isn't as effective to play in that style. The head is smaller, and while there's plenty of slap when it's flopped out, there's hardly any low fundamental. These are trade-offs that have to do with feel, sound, and the style that the drummer uses. I think feel comes before sound, generally."

It's Your Decision

So, we're back to the opening question: Which bass drum configuration is going to be right for you, considering your music and your playing style? We've looked into the physics of how bass drums work, and we've heard some very well-informed opinions. And there *are* some fairly objective rules at play, which we discussed earlier in our "What Does What?" sidebar. Take a glance and see if you can put together the sonic and mechanical attributes that will add up to the kick drum of your dreams. But when it comes to feel, that's the part of the equation that only your heart—and your feet—can answer.



Bass Drum Heads

Gone are the days when drummers had to put the same heads on their bass drums as on their toms—and then add tape, blankets, shredded newspaper, or other home-made methods in an attempt to control overring without losing depth and tone. Drumhead manufacturers have spent the past several years developing high-tech bass drum heads specifically designed to offer attack, projection, punch, and tone—all with whatever level of control a drummer might desire. Here's a look at the options currently available.

AQUARIAN

Super-Kick I

The Super-Kick series features Aquarian's "Floating Muffling System." A narrow felt muffling ring is attached to the backside of the drumhead to produce a low-end, well-defined, punchy sound. The Super-Kick I is a clear, single-ply, medium-weight batter. Prices range from $51.84 (16") to $82.08 (28"). Texture Coated versions are priced slightly higher.

Aquarian Super-Kick series

Super-Kick II

This 2-ply version of the Super-Kick I provides extra durability and a more focused sound. Prices range from $67.50 (18") to $83.70 (26"). Texture Coated versions are priced slightly higher.

Super-Kick III

The Super-Kick III is a coated, single-ply, medium-weight batter with a Power Dot in the center for added reinforcement. Prices range from $67.50 (16") to $88.70 (28").

Force I

The Force I is a clear, single-ply, medium-weight batter with a muffling ring tucked into the hoop on the underside of the head. The ring has special "tone holes" that allow it to move and resonate with the head for a powerful attack with outstanding projection. A free Kick Pad is included. Prices range from $46.17 (16") to $65.07 (28"). Satin Finish coated versions are also available.

Force II

Force II resonant bass drum heads feature the same vented muffling ring as Force I heads, and are available in gloss black or white. A free Port Hole is included. Prices range from $48.33 (16") to $65.07 (28").

Aquarian Force series

Modern Vintage

These single-ply heads are available in medium and thin weights. They feature a special coating designed to create the look, feel, and warm sound of a calfskin head. Bass drum heads have a vertical felt strip adhered to their undersides for a "swing era" look and sound, with no extra muffling required. Prices range from $67.50 (18") to $89.10 (28").

Aquarian Vintage Series

WELCOME TO THE JUNGLE

RMV

Although drummers in North America may not yet be familiar with the RMV name, you soon will be. Based in Brazil— the land of rain forests, extreme athletes and world-class music— RMV's been making professional-grade drums for nearly 30 years.

RMV Drums are made exclusively from hand-selected Brazilian maple that's harvested from environmentally-safe, self-sustaining local forests and they're available in a full spectrum of stage, studio and stadium-style shell configurations to fit the widest range of modern performance situations. These great looking, great sounding drums not only feature innovative designs, advanced components and custom craftsmanship, they offer exceptional quality at a surprisingly affordable price.

So check out an RMV kit at your favorite drum shop. We think you'll find that even though there may be a forest-full of drums you can choose from, there's only one that's king of the jungle.

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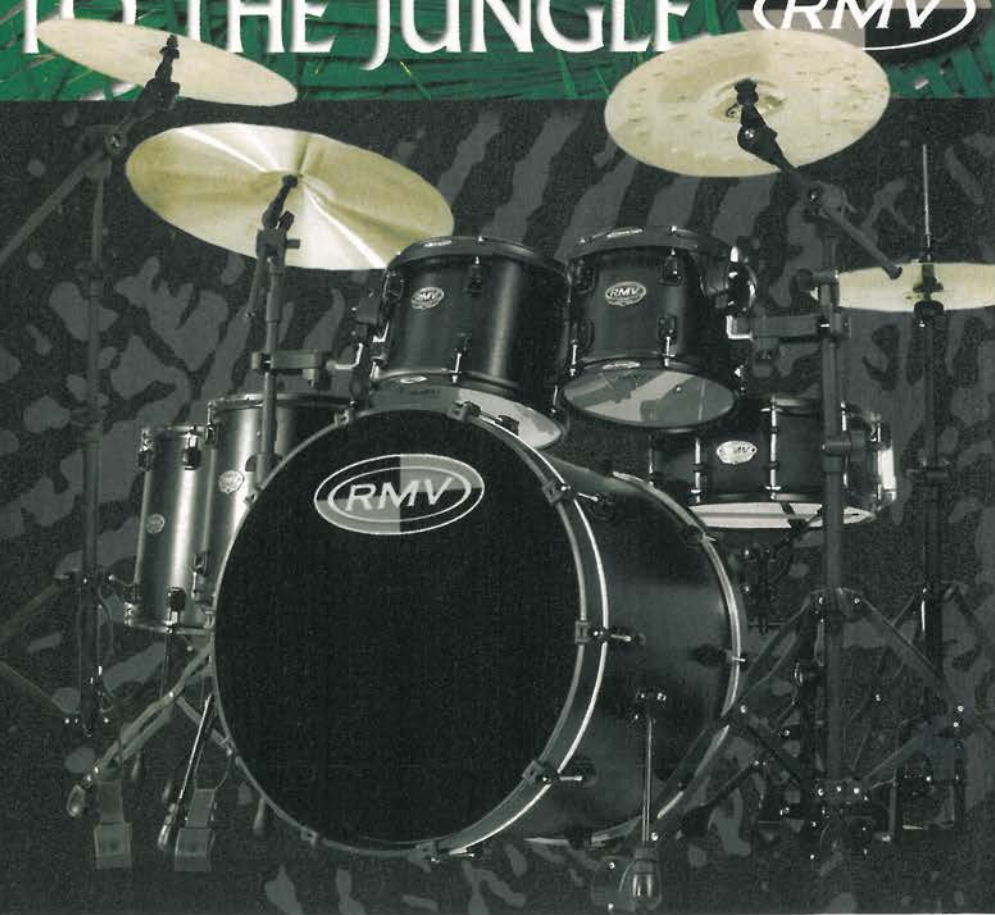
www.rmvdrums.com



American Vintage

American Vintage heads are identical to Modern Vintage models, except that they have slightly larger hoop diameters to allow for an easy fit on most vintage drumshells. Prices range from $67.50 (20") to $89.10 (28").

Regulator

These single-ply resonant bass drum heads feature Aquarian's "Floating Muffling System." They are designed to be companions for Super-Kick and Force batter heads. Regulator heads are available in gloss black or white, with a 7" hole in the center, a 4¾" offset hole, or no hole. Prices range from $47.52 (16") to $73.98 for (28").

(714) 632-0230, www.aquariandrumheads.com.

Aquarian Regulator series

ATTACK

No Overtone

No Overtone heads are fitted with a thin-ply ring on the underside of the head to remove "just the right amount of overtone without choking the sound." Clear and coated versions are available from $36 (16") to $45 (24").

Thin Skin3 No Overtone

These heads combine the No Overtone muffling ring with two-ply construction. They are said to play like single-ply heads in terms of feel and response, but offer the tonal characteristics and durability of two-ply models. Clear and coated versions are available from $63 (20") to $78 (24").

Attack No Overtone

Tone Ridge

These heads feature single-ply construction with a reinforced tone ridge around the outer edge of the upper surface. The ridge is said to reduce overtones without choking the resonance of the head. Clear and coated versions are available from $22.50 (16") to $46 (24").

Terry Bozzio No Overtone

Terry Bozzio heads combine USA-made Mylar film with a steel locking collar and special easy-tune design. The single-ply heads feature No Overtone muffling rings. Smooth white versions are available from $38.50 (18") to $46.50 (24"); clear and coated versions are available from $49.50 (18") to $73 (24").

Ported Bass Heads

Ported single-ply and ported black No Overtone front heads feature 4"-diameter holes that are reinforced for durability. Single-ply heads are available from $44 (18") to $51 (24"); black No Overtone heads are available from $50 (18") to $59 (24").

(800) 282-0110, www.universalpercussion.com.

EVANS

EMAD

The EMAD (Externally Mounted Adjustable Damping) is a 10-mil, single-ply bass drum head fitted with an external holder for two interchangeable foam damping rings of varying width. Switching from one ring to another can be done in seconds, allowing the user to fine-tune pedal response and muffling quickly and easily. The EMAD is said to maximize natural attack characteristics while offering tremendous low end and dynamic range, even at low volume levels. Heads are available in clear and coated versions. List price ranges from $64 (18") to $80 (24").

EQ Series

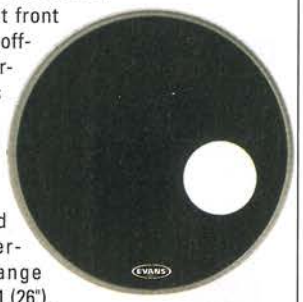
The EQ series offers a selection of single- and double-ply heads with features like internal overtone control rings, removable muffle rings, and dry vents. These features, in combination with specially designed front heads and bass drum accessories, allow the player to make small changes in set-up and selection to achieve the ideal bass drum sound.

Evans EQ head with vent holes

Heads are available in EQ1 (single-ply, batter and resonant, clear and coated), EQ2 (double-ply, batter and resonant, clear), EQ3 (double-ply, batter and resonant, clear and coated), and EQ4 (single-ply, batter only, clear and coated) versions. Prices range from $48 (18") to $88 (26").

EQ3 Resonant Bass Head

The EQ3 Resonant front head features an offset 5" hole for internal miking, and is fitted with an internal control ring. It's available in black, frosted, smooth white, and frosted white versions. Prices range from $53 (18") to $81 (26").
(631) 439-3300,
www.evansdrumheads.com.

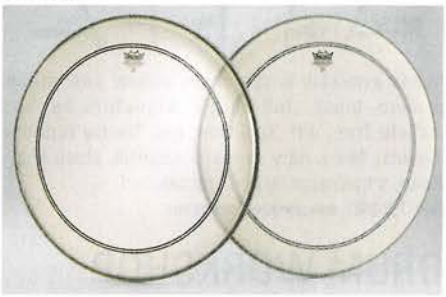


Evans EQ3 Resonant

REMO

PowerStroke 3

PowerStroke 3 heads feature a thin underlay at the outer edge of the head to subtly dampen unwanted overtones for a balance of response and tone control. Batter heads include a FALAM Slam self-adhesive impact pad. Ebony heads include a 5" black DynamO vent hole template. Models include clear, coated, smooth white, clear with dot, coated with dot, smooth white with dot, FiberSkyn 3, Renaissance, Ebony, and Suede, and can be used as batter or front heads as applicable. Prices range from $46.50 (18" clear) to $134 (40" Smooth White with dot).



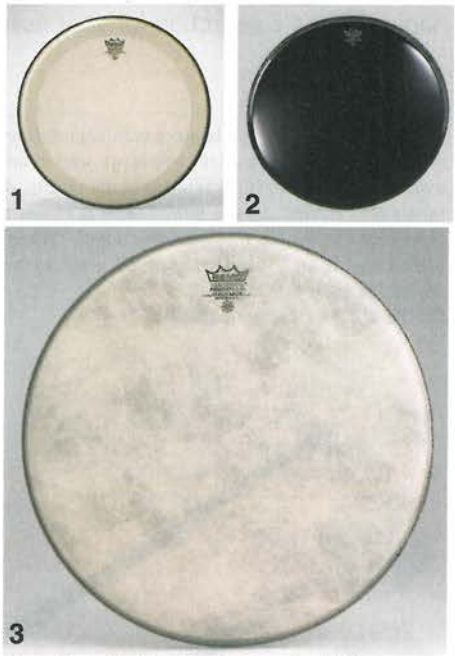
Remo Powerstroke 3 batters

PowerStroke 4

PowerStroke 4 heads are 2-ply versions of the PowerStroke 3. Available in clear, coated, and Ebony versions with Falam Slam pads, and in Smooth White with dot. Prices range from $52.25 (18" coated or clear) to $85.50 (28" Ebony).

Additional Models

Bass drum models are also offered in Remo's clear, coated, and smooth white Weatherking Ambassador and Emperor lines, along with clear and coated Pinstripes, batter and resonant Ebony models, and Suede, Controlled Sound (dotted), Renaissance, and FiberSkyn 3 versions.
(661) 294-5600, www.remo.com.



Remo PowerStroke 3 Renaissance head (1), PowerStroke 3 Ebony front head (2), and FiberSkyn 3 Ambassdor head (3)

Bass Drum Beaters

Virtually every drum and hardware manufacturer that sells bass drum pedals also sells bass drum beaters as original equipment or after-market items. But several accessory manufacturers offer an extra-wide variety of beaters, including some that feature unique materials and distinctive looks. Here's a selection for your perusal.

CANNON

Cannon offers bass drum beaters with high carbon steel shafts. Hard felt ($24) and large and small wood-head beaters ($22) feature black shafts. A reversible felt/ABS plastic beater ($24) features a chrome shaft. The Action Reversible beater ($19.95) offers nylon and felt surfaces as well as an adjustable weight on the shaft.
(800) 282-0110, www.universalpercussion.com.

DANMAR

Danmar Percussion offers a wide variety of traditional and specialty bass drum beaters. Basic models include hard felt, maple, and red hardwood heads, with standard- and extra-length shafts. Color Kick beaters feature black shafts and felt

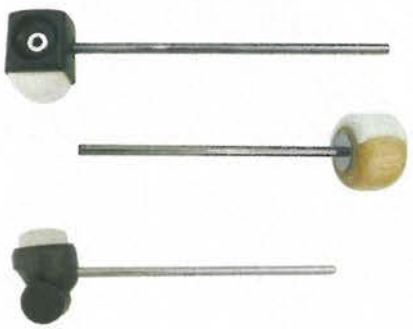
heads available in turquoise, yellow, red, green, orange, black, and purple. Signature beaters include Zoro, J.R. Robinson, and Tommy Aldridge models. And a new series of colorful, plush Fuzzy Beaters has recently been introduced.
(949) 756-8481, www.danmarpercussion.com.

DRUM WORKSHOP

The hardware/accessory division of DW offers large and medium felt beaters ($29), as well as a wood beater ($16), all of which include shaft weights. DW's 101 two-way beater ($29) features plastic and felt surfaces, and is available in standard or long length. The new HardCore dynamic beater ($36) has a unique flat foam impact surface. It features an adjustable core that controls the amount of attack.
(805) 485-6999, www.dwdrums.com.

GIBRALTAR

In addition to standard felt and hardwood beaters, Gibraltar offers a self-aligning dual-surface (felt/plastic) model, a felt/wood dual-surface model, and a lightweight felt/plastic dual-surface model.
(860) 509-8888, www.kamanmusic.com.



MARRELL

Marrell Drums offers distinctive and colorful bass drum beaters that feature such shapes as skulls, dice, basketballs, and pool 8-balls. They're made of cast epoxy and feature surgical stainless-steel shafts that are secured using a liquid thread lock. The small but dense beaters are fairly heavy, and are designed "for the heavier player."
Www.marrelldrums.com.

PRO-MARK

In addition to standard felt and hardwood beaters, Pro-Mark offers solid-acrylic Crystal Ball beaters, as well as Kick Rods, which are created from bundled dowels.
(877) 776-6275, www.promark.com.

PURESOUND PERCUSSION

Puresound offers the Speedball beater. It features a self-adjusting head that automatically swivels to adapt its flat impact surface to any playing angle. This design guarantees solid contact between the beater surface and the bass drum head on every stroke. The beater is mounted on a hardened stainless-steel shaft.

Made of a specially formulated blue hardened plastic, the Speedball beater is available with surfaces of plastic (for a sharp attack), rubber (for more punch), and felt (for a traditional tone). Each is priced at $32.95. A matching blue counterweight allows drummers to customize the feel of the beater's throw.
(818) 990-1562, www.puresoundpercussion.com.

SLUG

Slug Percussion offers the PowerHead beater series, in four models. The white Jazz Pro ($56.95) features a lightweight titanium shaft for technique and speed. The green Standard ($35.95), black Junior ($35.95), and red Punch Collar ($40.95) models feature stainless-steel shafts of varying lengths. The Punch Collar adds a ½-oz. weight for more

impact power. All beaters feature bend-proof tapered shafts with lifetime guarantees, as well as self-adjusting, cam-action, hammer-shaped heads made of elastomer plastic. The heads rotate for two different sounds and playing actions.
(312) 432-0553, www.slugdrums.com.

SUPERBEATERS

Superbeaters feature ultra-dense rubber balls as the beater heads. They're designed to offer improved rebound and shock reduction while creating a deep, powerful bass drum sound. Several different sizes and densities are available to provide a choice of pedal action and acoustic character.

(720) 276-3948, www.superbeaters.com.

VATER

Vater beaters feature steel shafts that are guaranteed not to bend or break. Beater heads are fastened to the shafts with perm-lock safety nuts for extra security.

Vater's standard beaters include felt, natural wood, and red wood models. Their Poly Ball beater ($28.50) features a head made of white polymer, which flattens at the impact point over time to provide a defined punch from bass drums. Their Vintage Bomber ($28.50) features a cork center wrapped with a soft, puffy synthetic covering, and is reminiscent in look, feel, and sound to the lamb's-wool beaters from decades ago.

(781) 767-1877, www.vater.com.

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Bentley's Drum Shop ★ Fresno, CA ★ 559/222-5011 ★ bentleysdrum.com
Birmingham Percussion ★ Birmingham, AL ★ 205/823-9911 ★ birminghampercussion.com
Buffalo Drum Outlet ★ Buffalo, NY ★ 716/897-0950 ★ buffalodrumoutlet.com
Cadence Drums ★ Rochester, NY ★ 585/247-8690 ★ cadencedrums.com
Colorado Drum & Percussion ★ Ft. Collins, CO ★ 970/416-0362 ★ coloradodrum.com
Columbus Percussion ★ Columbus, OH ★ 614/885-7372 ★ columbuspercussion.com
Dale's Drum Shop ★ Harrisburg, PA ★ 717/652-2466 ★ dalesdrumshop.com
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Drum Center ★ Lexington, KY ★ 859/276-1827 ★ drumcenterlex@aol.com
Drum Circuit ★ San Luis Obispo, CA ★ 805/543-0338 ★ drumcircuit.com
Drum Headquarters ★ St. Louis, MO ★ 314/644-0235 ★ drumheadquarters.com
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Tommy's Drum Shop ★ Austin, TX ★ 512/444-3786 ★ tommysdrumshop.com
West Coast Drum Center ★ Santa Ana, CA ★ 714/545-2345 ★ westcoastdrums.com
Zampino's Drum Shop ★ North Canton, OH ★ 330/499-1198 ★ zampinos.com
Just Drums ★ Toronto, ON ★ Canada ★ 416/226-1211 ★ justdrums.com

www.fivestardrumshops.com

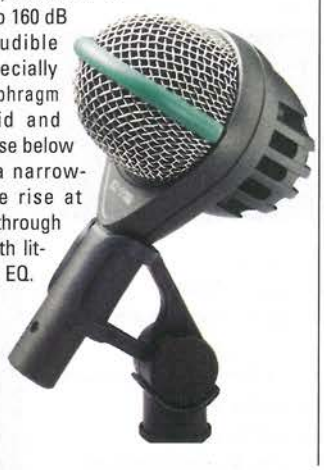
Bass Drum Microphones

There was a time when a sound technician would throw the biggest mic' available in front of a bass drum, dial up the bass on the EQ, and hope for the best. These days, the microphone market is chock-full of highly specialized units dedicated to capturing all the nuances of a kick drum's sound. Here's an overview.

AKG

D 112

The D 112 has earned a reputation for heavy-duty kick-drum use, because it can handle up to 160 dB SPL with no audible distortion. A specially engineered diaphragm maintains solid and powerful response below 100 Hz, while a narrow-band presence rise at 4 kHz punches through dense mixes with little or no added EQ. List price: $346.
(615) 620-3800, www.akg.com.



APPLIED MICROPHONE TECHNOLOGY

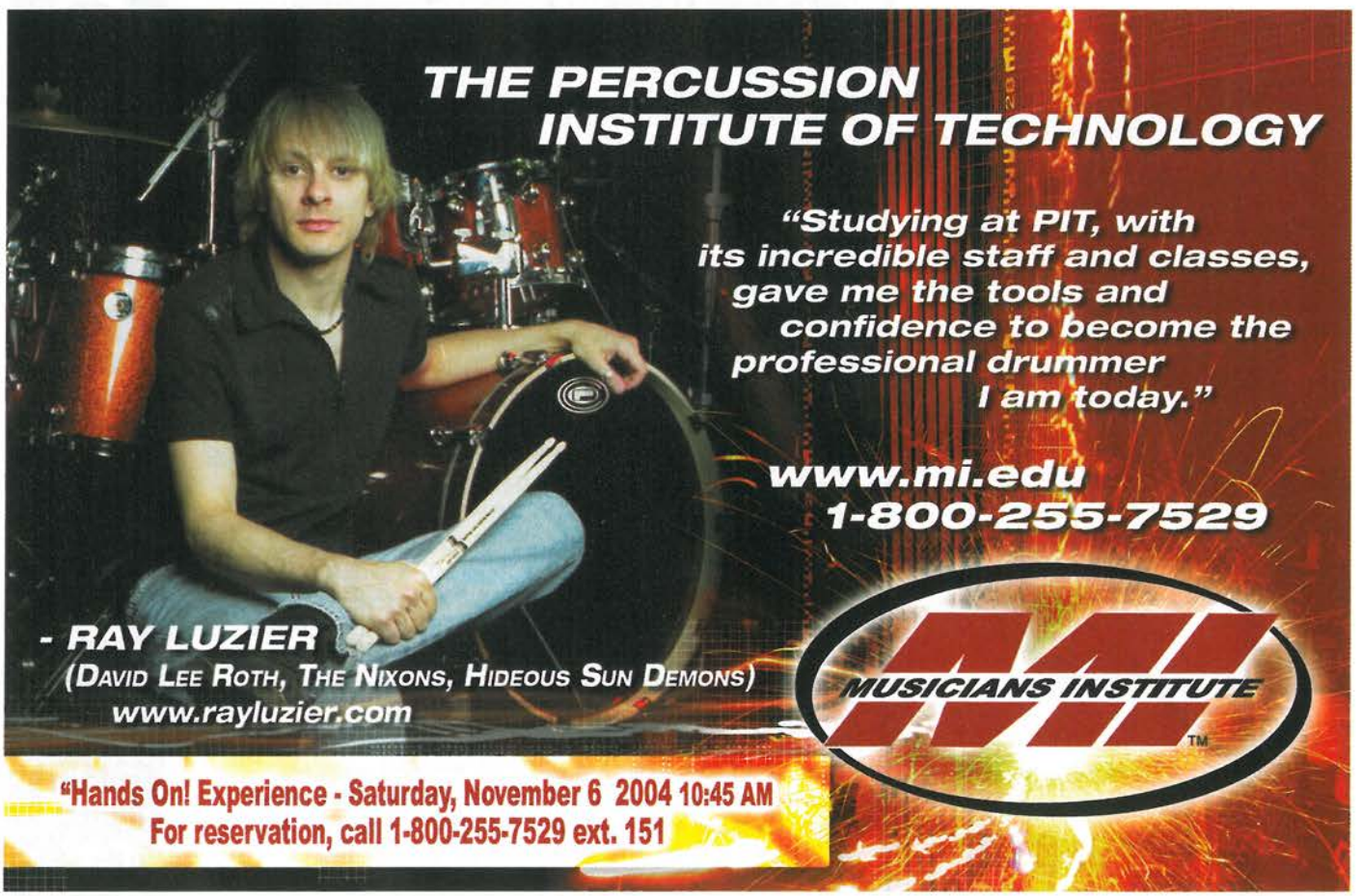
M51

The M51's ultra-compact design incorporates integrated circuit technology. An interchangeable chip allows the mic' to emulate the characteristics of many popular microphones. The mic' is said to be capable of picking up subtle passages, and to withstand sound pressure levels up to 141 dB. List price: $499.
(973) 729-9333, www.appliedmic.com.

AUDIO-TECHNICA

AE2500

The Artist Elite AE2500 is actually two mic's in a single casing. A condenser and a dynamic element are both fed through a 5-pin XLR cable that splits into two separate standard 3-pin XLR input connectors. This provides two discrete input signals from one source, perfectly in phase. The dynamic element picks up low-frequency tonality, while the condenser element captures attack and punchiness. List price: $699.
(330) 686-2600, www.audio-technica.com.



AUDIX

D6

The D6 is a dynamic microphone specifically designed for use on kick drums in live and studio applications. It is electronically tailored to provide "a huge, rock-solid sound" with little or no EQ. List price: $349.

D4

The D4 is a versatile dynamic microphone that captures instruments with extended frequencies below 100 Hz, making it excellent for kick drum. List price: $299.

F14

Part of the cost-effective Fusion series, the F14 is a professional dynamic kick drum microphone available only in the Fusion 7 drum-mic' value pack. It's said to offer enhanced low end with punch and clarity. List price: $199.

F12

The F12 is designed for use in rehearsal studios, home studios, small clubs, schools, and churches. It is said to be excellent for kick-drum applications. List price: $149.
(800) 966-8261, www.audixusa.com.

AVLEX

AVS-20

The AVS-20 is a supercardioid dynamic kick drum microphone with an integrated swivel-stand adapter, extended low-frequency response from 40 Hz to 15 kHz, high-SPL tolerance, -84 dB sensitivity, and a gold-plated XLR connector. List price: $145 (or as part of the AVS-24 drum-mic' kit, $499).

Superlux PRO-218A

The Superlux PRO-218A is a supercardioid kick drum microphone with an integrated swivel-stand adapter, extended low-frequency response from 20 Hz to 10 kHz, extra-high SPL tolerance, -64 dB sensitivity, and a gold-plated XLR connector. List price: $146 (or as part of the DRK-B5C2 drum-mic' kit, $495).

Superlux FK-2

The Superlux FK-2 is a supercardioid dynamic instrument microphone suitable for entry-level bass-drum miking. It features an integrated swivel-stand adapter, low-frequency response from 30 Hz to 10 kHz, high SPL tolerance, -62 dB sensitivity, and a gold-plated XLR connector. List price: $45 (or as part of the DRK-F3 [$99], DRK-F5 [$187], DRK-F3H2 [$231], and DRK-F5H3 [$364] drum-mic' kits).
(913) 906-9216, www.avlex.com.

BEYERDYNAMIC

Opus 99

The Opus 99 has been developed especially for miking bass drums. The strong neodymium magnet system and a mass-reduced diaphragm are said to give the mic' "powerful reproduction, excellent transient characteristics, and optimized frequency response for condenser-quality sound." The mic' can operate at very high SPLs without loss of sound quality. The optional ST 99 stand can place the mic' inside or in front of the bass drum. List price: $299.
(631) 293-3200, www.beyerdynamic.com.

CAD

KBM412

The KBM412 is a neodymium dynamic kick mic' with extended low-end frequency response. List price: $129.

e100

The e100 is a supercardioid electret condenser that has gained a great reputation for kick-drum use. It operates on two 9-volt rechargeable nickel hydride batteries that are trickle-charged by phantom power, giving the mic' a power reserve for fast transients/high SPLs. List price: $399.
(440) 354-3300, www.cadmics.com.

ELECTRO-VOICE

N/D 868

The N/D 868 features a large-diaphragm N/DYM element specifically designed to mike kick drums. Carefully engineered low-frequency response is said to provide "a great sound right out of the box." List price: $398.
(616) 695-6831, www.electrovoice.com.

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SENNHEISER

e602

The e602 from Sennheiser's Evolution series is a cardioid microphone especially suitable for use with bass drums. It features a rugged metal body, high-performance voice-coil construction with large-diaphragm design, fast transient response, and frequency-independent directivity to provide isolation from other on-stage signals. List price: $319.

(860) 434-9190, www.sennheiserusa.com.

SAMSON

Q Kick

The Q Kick features an extra-large dynamic diaphragm element in a rugged steel frame, and is said to rival the sound of mic's costing much more. Its cardioid polar pattern is designed to reduce feedback. The mic' is fitted with a gold-plated XLR connector and a swivel mount. A carry case is included. List price: $199.99.

(516) 364-2244, www.samsontech.com.

SHURE

Beta 52A

Optimized for low-frequency bass punch and high-power SPL handling, the Beta 52A's supercardioid design is said to provide maximum isolation from other onstage sounds. List price: $336.70.

Beta 91

The Beta 91 is a low-profile mic' that requires no external mounting hardware. Instead, it lies flat on a pillow or other surface inside a kick drum to capture "superb attack and low-end punch." List price: $436.80.

(847) 600-2000, www.shure.com.

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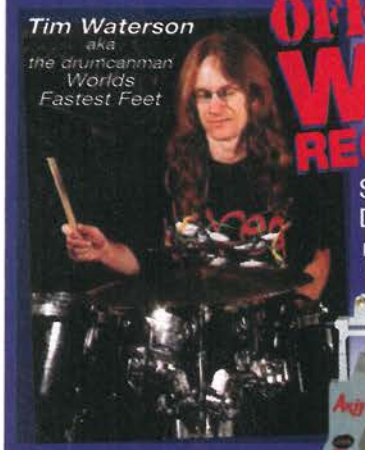
World's Fastest Pedal



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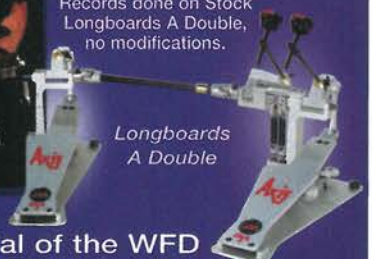

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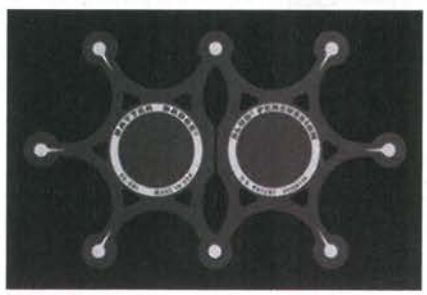
Accessories

BASS DRUM IMPACT PADS

Several accessory companies offer specialized pads to be placed on a drumhead at the beater-impact point. While all of these pads are designed to protect the head, several are also intended to contribute specific acoustic characteristics that help shape the sound of the drum.

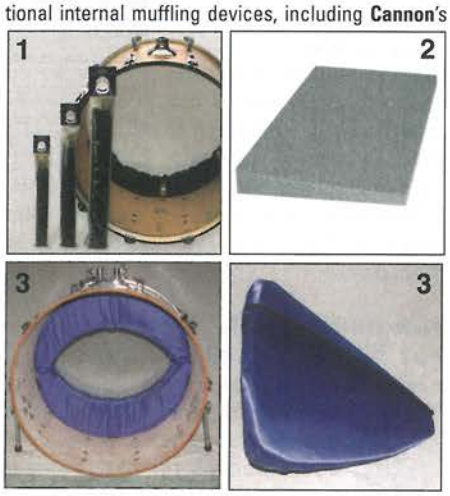


Danmar Impact Pads and Metal Kick Pads (top), and Slug Percussion's Double Bass Batter Badge

Notable examples of bass drum impact pads include **Aquarian**'s single and double kick pads made from their Power Dot material (www.aquariandrumheads.com), **Cannon**'s adhesive-backed leather pad (www.universalpercussion.com), **Danmar**'s **P.D.K.P. Impact Pads** and **Metal Kick Pads** (www.danmarpercussion.com), **Evans'** black nylon **EQ Patch** and Aramid Fiber **AF Patch** (www.evansdrumheads.com), **Remo**'s Kevlar **Falam Slam** pad (www.remo.com), and **Slug Percussion**'s **Batter Badges** (www.slugdrums.com).

MUFFLING DEVICES

In addition to the various self-muffling drumheads currently available, drummers can also utilize additional internal muffling devices, including **Cannon**'s foam-wedge **BassMufflers** (www.universalpercussion.com), **Evans' EQ Pad** and **RGS (Resonance Gate System) Pad** (www.evansdrumheads.com), **Remo's Adjustable Bass Drum Muffling System** developed with Dave Weckl (www.remo.com), and **Thumpers'** satin-covered polyfoam **Live** and **Studio** bass drum pillows (www.thumpersdrum.com).



Remo's Adjustable Bass Drum Muffling System (1), Cannon's Bass Muffler (2), and Thumpers' Bass Drum Pillows (3)

BASS DRUM ELEVATION DEVICES

Several devices are available to help elevate small bass drums and/or other percussion instruments so that they can be more effectively played with a bass drum pedal. Examples include the all-steel **D'Amico Bass Drum Cradle** (www.damicodrums.com), the tubular-construction **Danmar Tom Kick Riser** (www.danmarpercussion.com), and the collapsible **Drum Workshop 9909** Bass Drum/Percussion Lifter (www.dwdrums.com).

Danmar's Tom Kick Riser (left) and DW's 9909 Bass Drum/ Percussion Lifter

SOUND HOLE REINFORCEMENTS

Sound control and/or miking requirements often involve cutting a hole in the front head of a bass drum. Devices available to help cut and/or reinforce those holes include **Aquarian**'s **Port Holes** (www.aquariandrumheads.com), **Big Bang Distribution**'s 4" and 6" hard-plastic snap-on **Bass Drum Os** (www.bigbangdist.com), and **Remo**'s **RemOs** (www.remo.com).

Bass Drum Os from Big Bang Distribution

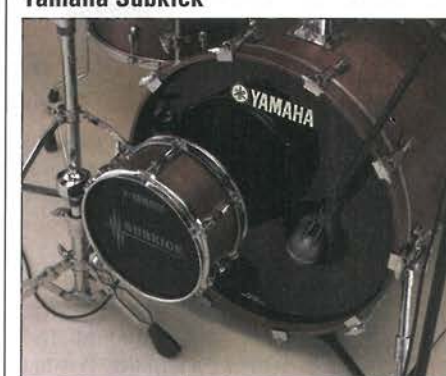
LOW-FREQUENCY ENHANCEMENT DEVICES

Drum Workshop Woofer

Created to act as a sub-woofer for the drumset, this specialty drum is designed to utilize the sympathetic frequencies from the bass drum to further enhance roundness and low-end punch. The 8"-deep drum comes in 18" to 28" diameters and does not include reinforcement hoops. A May-ATM25BD is factory-installed, and internal miking for the primary bass drum is recommended. TB12 tom brackets can be factory installed on DW bass drums and Woofers for a connected set-up. For temporary use, a cradle is available.

www.dwdrums.com.

Yamaha Subkick



The Subkick features a 6½" speaker shock-mounted into a 10" birch/mahogany drumshell. The speaker is reverse-wired to an XLR jack, converting the speaker diaphragm into a microphone diaphragm. This allows the Subkick to pick up low-end frequencies that a normal microphone can't. A Yamaha tom-mounting bracket affixed to the shell mounts to a CL-940 ball clamp, which slides into the base of a double-braced 800 series snare stand. The flexibility of the stand allows the Subkick to be positioned easily in live or studio situations.

www.yamahadrums.com.

Gettin' On The Good Foot
The Hottest Bass Drum Study Materials

Oh, you lucky bass drum fans! A good number of today's educational drum materials focus on kick technique. And quite a few general drum-education books and videos contain solid information on the topic. Here are a few of the best "bass-centric" items you should check out.

The Classics

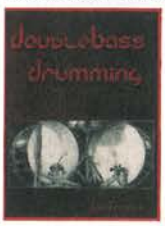
Bass Drum Control
by Colin Bailey (Hal Leonard)

Bass Drum Control, which was originally released in 1964, is considered by many to be the bible of bass drum study. Recently the book has been revised, with an added CD. Not a bad place to start your studies.

Building Bass Drum Technique
by Ron Spagnardi (Modern Drummer)

Subtitled "Strength, Speed, Endurance, And Control For Single Bass Drum Players," this book by *Modern Drummer*'s late founder covers the subject in a deliberate, methodical manner. A speed and endurance program features an accompanying progress chart. Further topics include foot accents, soloing, and hand/foot patterns. Summary solos further enhance the lessons.

Double Bass Drumming
by Joe Franco (Warner Bros.)



Hard rock drummer Joe Franco (Good Rats, Twisted Sister, Kelly Osbourne) first published this book in 1984, and it still attracts drummers looking to improve their chops. (It took number-15 in *Modern Drummer*'s Top 25 Drum Books list, after all.) Areas covered include fills, beats, independence, and control. Joe followed up this book with an identically titled video, also on Warner Bros.

The Encyclopedia Of Double Bass Drumming
by Bobby Rondinelli and Michael Lauren (Modern Drummer)

In this book, Rainbow/Black Sabbath/Blue Öyster Cult drummer Bobby Rondinelli and Drummers Collective instructor Michael Lauren offer hundreds of innovative warm-up, beat, and fill exercises, tips for getting started, a discography of important double bass recordings—even a timeline of the most important double bass drummers in history, including photos of their setups.

Recent Additions

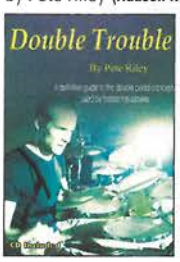
Double Bass Drumming
by Jeff Bowders (Hal Leonard)

Bowders' "mirrored groove system" allows both feet to gain equal dexterity by creating two-bar phrases that reverse identical (mirrored) foot patterns at the beginning of each bar. This book includes endless combinations of 8th, 16th, 32nd, and triplet combinations of double bass groove patterns, as well as various ride patterns for advanced development. A CD-R highlights at least one exercise per page.

Bass Drum Control Solos
by Colin Bailey (Hal Leonard)

A follow-up to *Bass Drum Control* (see above), *Solos* ratchets it up a notch. A workout of four-bar linear "solos" in 16th-note (and some triplet) patterns, this book aims to help drummers expand the use of the foot in solo licks, as well as control and endurance.

Double Trouble
by Pete Riley (Hudson Music)

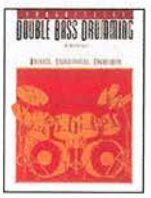


A wealth of challenging patterns that cover most of today's advanced double bass techniques. Topics this book covers include single strokes, linear phrasing with 32nd notes, unison phrases, 32nd-note unison phrasing, and time playing, broken into many triplets, ruffs, ostinatos, etc. Includes a play-along CD.

Bass Drum Essentials For The Drumset
by Dave Black and Brian Fullen (Alfred)

The stated goals of this 88-page tutorial: developing your skill in coordinating the hands and feet, while reinforcing essential aspects of playing, such as locking in with the bass player, providing a strong foundation, and working together with the rest of the rhythm section. CD included.

Progressive Double Bass Drumming, Volume 1
by Rob Burget (Hal Leonard)



This book covers foot control, endurance, independence, and creativity exercises, featuring one- and two-measure patterns and fills, followed by six double bass solo examples.

2-Bass Hits
by Dave "Bedrock" Bedrosian (Centerstream)

Book/CD package designed to help double bass drummers learn the fundamentals and important rhythms.

And Don't Miss These

Progressive Steps To Bass Drum Technique For The Modern Drummer
by Ted Reed (Alfred)

Thirty-eight pages of rhythms and solo exercises in 4/4, progressively arranged to improve speed, control, endurance, and flexibility. Written by a drum-instruction master who brought us the classic *Progressive Steps To Syncopation*.

Jungle/Drum 'N' Bass For The Acoustic Drumset
by Johnny Rabb (Warner Bros.)

In this book, author Johnny Rabb demystifies jungle and drum 'n' bass grooves for the drumkit. Includes double bass grooves.

Exercises For Natural Playing

by Dave Weckl (Carl Fischer)

Check out this book and Weckl's *Natural Evolution* DVD for the fusion star's take on double-pedal exercises, among *many* other advanced drumming topics.

Thomas Lang

Creative Control (Hudson Music)

On this five-hour double DVD set, contemporary music's current *it* drummer performs countless advanced exercises for developing four-way independence. Includes inspirational foot and hand exercises and mind-boggling multi-pedal orchestration concepts. Lang's explanation of his Sonor Twin Effect pedal techniques is alone worth the cover price.

The UnReel Drum Book

by Marc Atkinson (Warner Bros.)

Modern master Vinnie Colaiuta has set a bar or two during his amazing career. In this unusual package, Marc Atkinson dissects, explains, and provides charts of Vinnie's rhythmic ideas from keyboardist Randy Waldman's *UnReel* CD, which is included. Yes, your feet will get worked—*hard.*

Extreme Drumming

featuring Marco Minnemann (Warner Bros.)

German drumming sensation Minnemann turns it loose on this mind-boggling 225-minute DVD. Feet, hands, brain—you have it, this video will test it.

Technique, Grooving, And Showmanship

featuring John Blackwell (Hudson Music)

This four-hour, two-DVD set offers in-depth coverage of the influences, grooves, showmanship, and advanced techniques of Prince's extraordinary drummer, including, of course, his killer bass drum technique.

The Mike Portnoy Anthology, Volume One

transcribed by Steve Ferraro (Hudson Music)

Transcriptions of Dream Theater's ever-popular double-kick master, including insightful notes.

Ultimate Play-Along Conundrum

by Billy Cobham (Warner Bros.)

A challenging yet enjoyable package from the legendary jazz-fusion drummer. Includes two play-along CDs. Emulating Cobham's drumming is a terrific workout.

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FREE CD Reveals...

"Amazing 'Short-Cut' Speed Secrets That Turned a Poor, Frustrated, and *Uncoordinated* Drummer Into a Monster Player That Gigging Bands Compete To Hire and Crowds Scream For

Struggling with my bass drum playing really sucks – I should know... For years I had horrible feet and my dream was to generate **machine gun** like speed & precision with my feet like Virgil Donati, but...

I Was Slow As A Snail AND Uncoordinated

After 9 years of playing I really didn't know if it was me or just my kick-pedals BUT as luck would have it, I saw an ad in *Modern Drummer* that was giving away a FREE 45-minute CD that would supposedly reveal the **pro's inside secrets** to playing your feet EXACTLY like your hands at any speed or time signature you desire. At first I thought it was a scam, but I was desperate. So I called, and a few days later the tape was in my mailbox.

I Was Blown Away When I Discovered...

- **7 "easy to learn" yet vicious exercises that can double your speed, coordination and endurance in days...**
- A "legitimate," simple and easy way to dominate your bass drum playing WITHOUT blowing money on some ultra expensive pedal or gizmo. *I'm flying on my Gibraltar Intruder pedals.*
- **Do you want your pedals to SMOKE? Then check out these 3 "key" adjustments to your pedal that are crucial, but ignored by nearly every drummer.**
- A 3-week beginner from Boston set the world's fastest feet record by using just one secret talked about on this free CD.
- **The real inside secrets to *mind-numbing* speed & coordination that pros keep hidden from you... AND more.**

Finally, you can quickly become the kind of mega-skilled drummer that gigging bands compete to hire and crowds scream for... **How do I know?** I'm now tasting the sweet life by making crazy amounts of money playing out 3-4 nights a week, AND I was just featured at the recent Ballistic Drumming® Festival in Pasadena CA.

FREE 45-Minute CD Can Change Your Double Bass Playing Forever!

Call for this FREE audio CD while it's fresh in your mind. It's normally $10, but free for a very limited time to the first 300 *Modern Drummer* readers who call and listen to this **Free Recorded Message 24hours/7days.** So call the Free Recorded message at **1-626-683-1709** and ask for **CD package DE12.**

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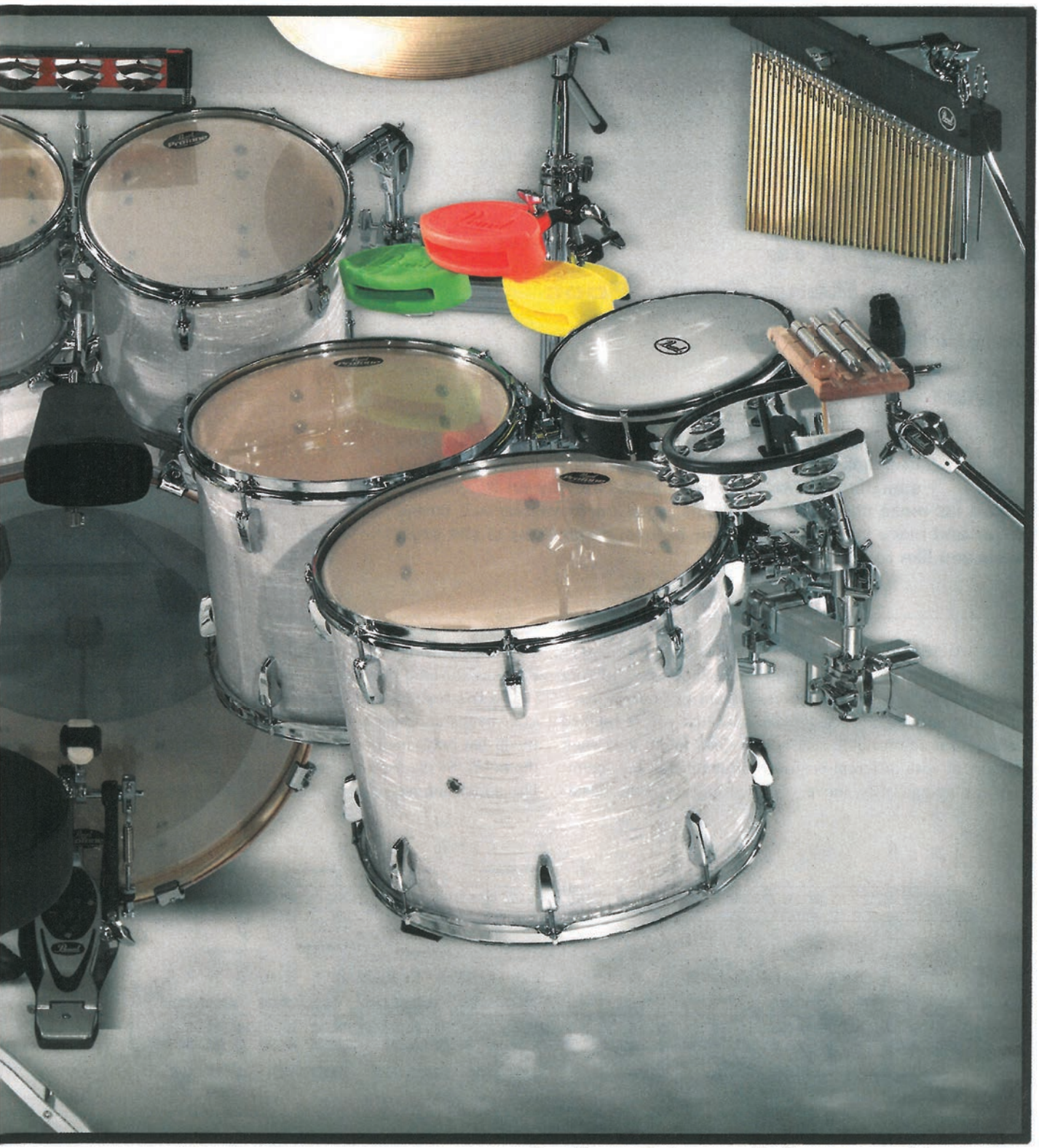

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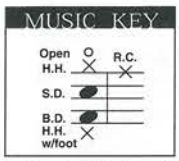
Pearl

From The Bottom Up

Getting Fit

With Your Bass Drum Foot

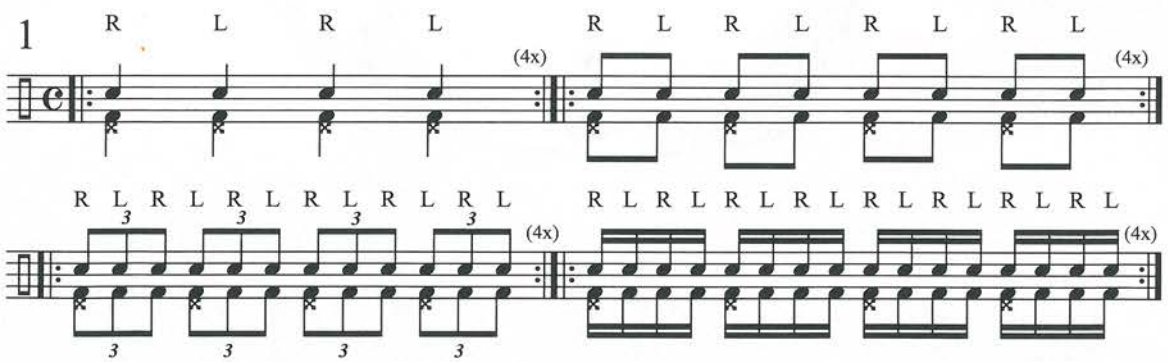
by Christian Finger



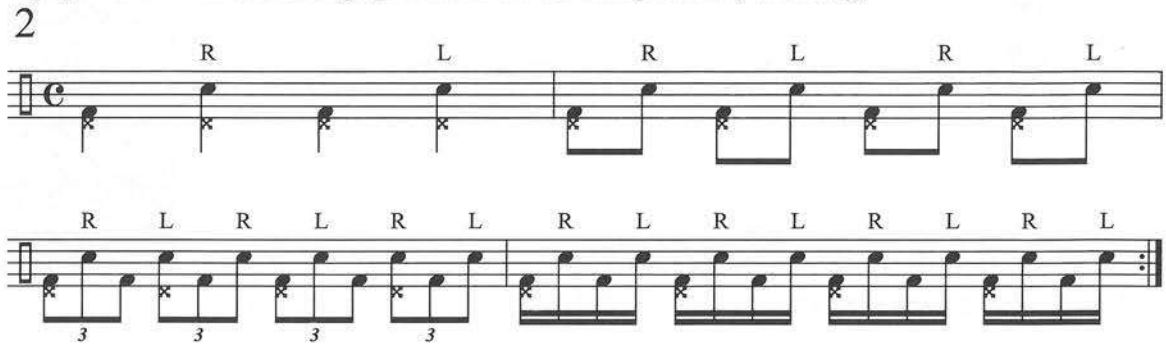
Mastering bass drum technique is truly a challenge. It's also an aspect of drumming that is often overlooked by most drummers when practicing. But by spending as little as five minutes a day on it, you can achieve a lot more control. As a result, your performance will sound stronger and more inventive than ever before, regardless of the style of music you like to play.

In this article I'm going to show you some exercises to strengthen your foot, increase your independence, and find interesting ways to integrate the bass drum in your grooves and fills. Before we get started, make sure that you're relaxed and sitting at a comfortable seat height. You might also want to experiment with different positions on the pedal. For example, when playing softly, move your foot closer to the beater on the pedal board and stay closer to the drumhead. Do the opposite for loud playing.

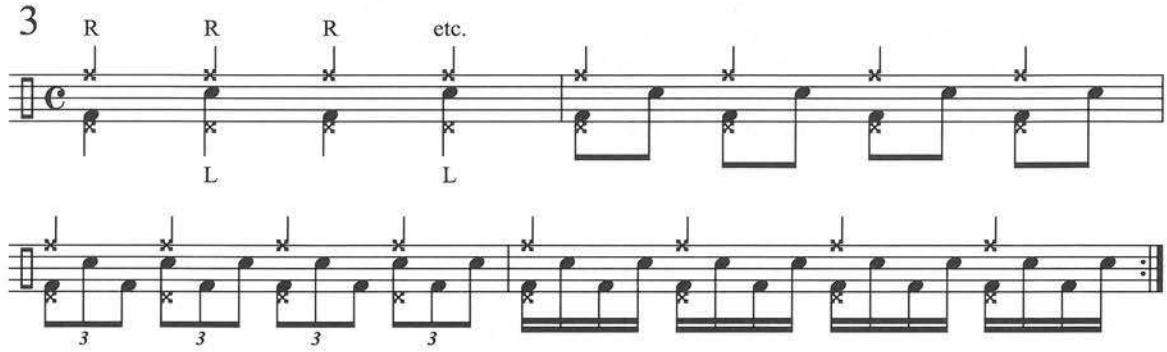
The first exercise focuses on the exact synchronization of your hands and bass drum foot. Notice that your left foot on the hi-hat plays quarter notes throughout. Don't "flam" any of the notes. Strive for precision when practicing these exercises. Use a metronome, starting at quarter note = 60.



For the next example, the material is divided between the snare and bass drum. (Important: To be able to play in different musical settings, practice all of these examples loudly *and* softly.)



The next step is to add quarter notes on the ride cymbal to increase your independence and place the exercise in more of a groove context. Notice how the sticking changes.

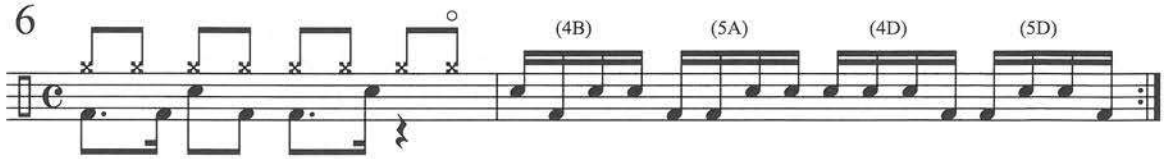


When you're comfortable with Example 3, go back and experiment with it by integrating your toms into the patterns with your left hand.

Now let's switch gears and look at interesting break and solo material, challenging your foot by breaking up 16th notes between your hands and the bass drum. Start by playing one 16th note on the bass drum and three on the snare.

Now play two 16th notes with the bass drum and two with the snare.

Once you've mastered the above exercises, combine them to create one-bar solos or fills. For example, here's a combination using 4B, 5A, 4D, and 5D.



As you can see, there are endless possibilities. Write them out and practice them, and be sure to orchestrate the notated snare drum notes on your toms. This will certainly enhance your repertoire for breaks. I hope you (and your foot) have fun with these ideas.

Christian Finger has performed with Lee Konitz, Rich Perry, and Dave Kikoski, and is the leader of his own group, Finger Trio. He can be reached at www.jazz-planet.com/fingertrio.

From The Bottom Up

Double Bass Beats

Part 1: Continuous 16th-Note Patterns

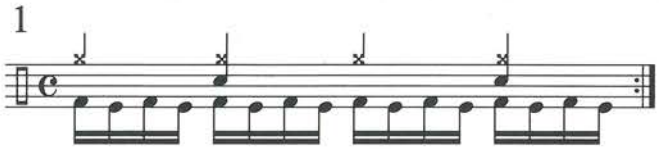
by Rod Morgenstein

The concept of playing two bass drums has been around for nearly a half century. And since the invention of the double pedal, the double bass sound has become extremely popular, particularly in the areas of progressive rock, funk, fusion, metal, and even mainstream rock.

Double bass beats can be grouped into one of two categories—continuous and non-continuous. This month's column consists of continuous double bass beats, which involve constantly alternating RLRL 16th notes on the bass drums with various hand patterns applied on top. As always, strive for a consistent, even sound between the two bass drums (or feet), and begin at a relatively slow tempo. (The examples are written with the ride pattern on the hi-hat line, but should also be played on other surfaces including the ride cymbal, the bell of the ride cymbal, and a cowbell.)

Examples 1 and 2 are standard, backbeat-oriented grooves, with a quarter-note ride pattern (Example 1) and an 8th-note ride pattern (Example 2).

1



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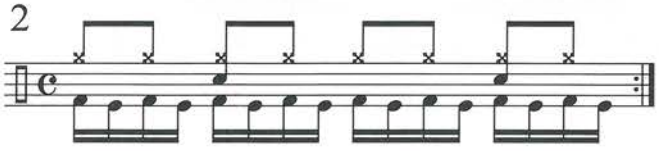
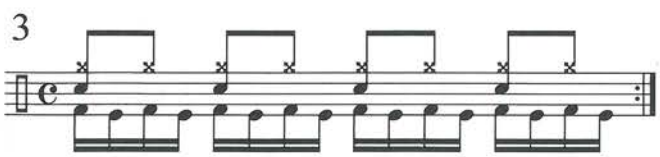


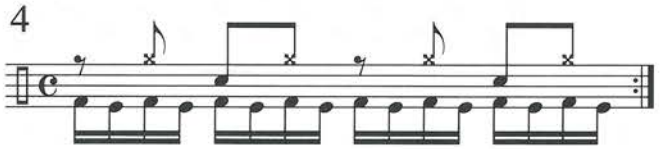
Example 3 has the snare playing on all four quarter notes. For added visual excitement and coordination building, try alternating the hands with this example, hitting the snare on beat 1 with the left hand while the right hand plays the ride cymbal, and then reversing the hands so beat 2 has the right hand hitting the snare and the left playing a crash cymbal.

3



An offbeat 8th-note ride pattern is used in Example 4.

4

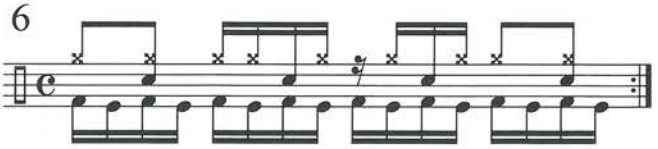


Example 5 has the snare playing on all the 8th-note upbeats. This pattern is commonly used in blast beats. (There are death metal drummers who are pushing the speed envelope when it comes to double bass, and they can play this beat at quarter note = 260 bpm and faster!)

5

Example 6 is a mambo cowbell pattern with the snare playing on all of the upbeat 8ths. I first heard a beat similar to this years ago on a Mötley Crüe record. Kudos to Tommy Lee for "fusing" together an Afro-Cuban rhythm with a pounding rock double bass pattern.

6



Example 7 is a half-time groove with the snare playing on beat 3.

7

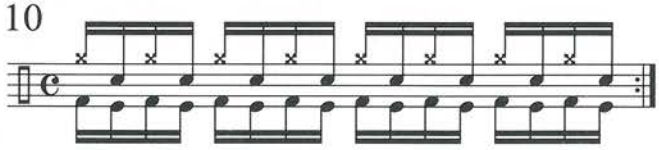
Example 8 is another Afro-Cuban rhythm, "cascara," played as the ride pattern and "fused" with the double bass concept.

8

Examples 9 and 10 are more blast beat patterns, which can be heard on countless recordings. In Example 9, both hands play 8th notes together in unison. In Example 10, they play alternating RLRL 16ths.

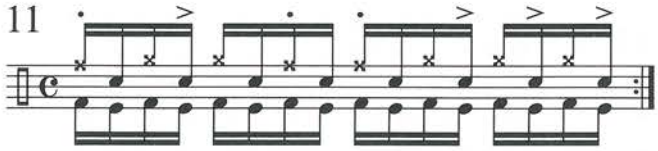
9

10



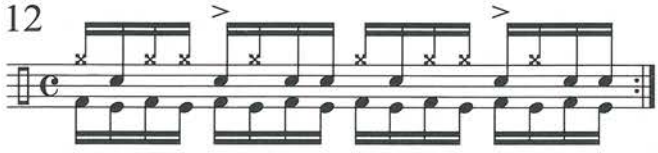
Example 11 is an alternating RLRL 16th-note hand pattern with various accents played on the bell of the ride cymbal and snare. The idea is to experiment with accents on the bell and snare in this alternating continuous pattern to come up with your own unique accent patterns.

11

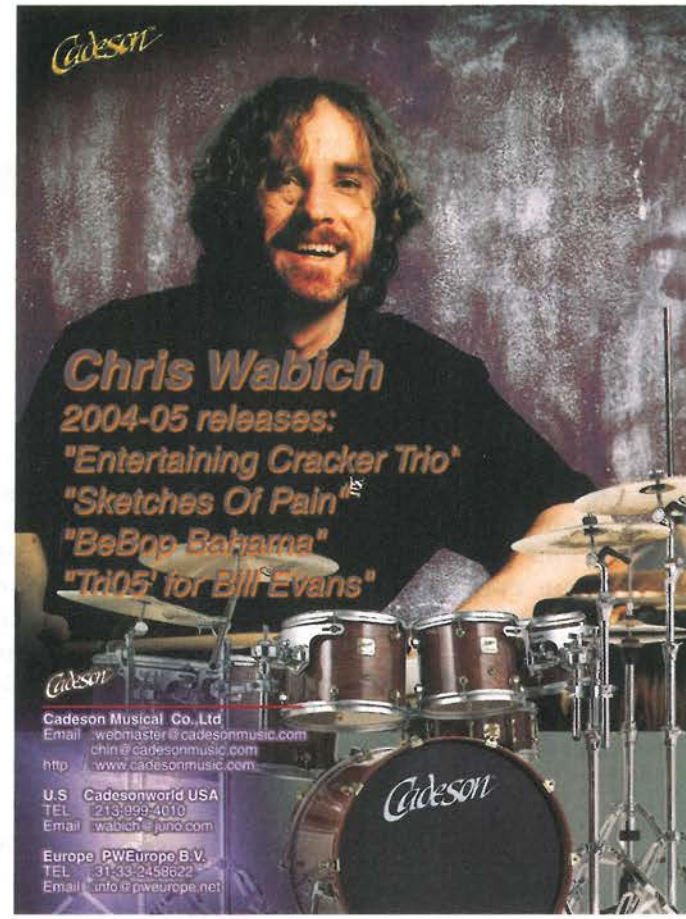


Example 12 is a paradiddle applied to the hands, with accents on the backbeats. Several rudiments work extremely well when applied to the continuous double bass concept, and the paradiddle is no exception.

12



Next time we'll look at continuous triplets and sextuplets and see what hand patterns work well in that framework. See you then!



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From The Bottom Up

Bass Drum Tone

Does Size Matter?

by Billy Ward

Louie Bellson was the first drummer I noticed whose drumset featured the bass drums. It always seemed to me that other drummers with two bass drums also had a ton of toms on their kits, and in some cases, woodblocks and all kinds of other bells and whistles too. But Louie had only two toms, a 13" and a 16". But there were two bass drums. Same size, too: 14x24. This drumset was talking about power, pure and simple. Louie's kit looked like a mid-sized Chevy with two big engines.

The Big Guys

Abe Laboriel Jr. played huge DWs on his tour with Paul McCartney. Surely this proves that size matters. I've not spoken to Abe. In fact, I've only met him once, but I'd bet there were more than a few nights during the tour that he wished he had a 22-incher out there instead of his 28" bass drum. Touring can be physically tiring, and those big drums can hurt you.

"I get tingly just thinking about how guys like Bernard Purdie can feather a bass drum and then lay into it really hard for a huge *downbeat."*

I played a 28" bass drum in my duet with Chris Whitley [on Ward's *Two Hands Clapping* disc] and was *so* grateful that we were done with our two songs in four takes! My legs were killing me from the extra *oomph* it took to play that big bass drum. Abe Jr. is about half my age, so maybe he wasn't hurting. And I've gotta admit, he sure looked cool up there playing those open Ringo/Beatle-inspired feels on that monstrous kit! He also, of course, sounded great.

Little Buddy

The guy with the small bass drum might be implying that he doesn't need size to get his work done. Confidence. Taste. When I take my little 16" bass drum kit to my local gigs, I feel like I've got a great challenge ahead of me. I need to make that teeny kit sound *big* somehow, and it's a thrill when that happens. But I have to tune that little 16" with tender loving care. The pillow inside the drum has to be just right (and if there wasn't a mic' inside, of course there would be *no* pillow inside).

Also, a teensy-weensy twist too high or low on just one of the tension rods, and the bottom end of this little bass drum goes down the drain. Not so with a big guy. You can almost put any kind of head on a large bass drum, have a tone-deaf guy from the hardware store tighten the lugs, and you'll still have a workable bass drum sound. But those calf muscles better be in good shape if you're going to pound out 16ths on it all night.

Bass Guitar/Bass Drum Wars

When I'm mixing a song at my studio, one of the first decisions that I have to make is, Who wins at the bottom? The bass or the drums? I usually like to have the bass drum win at the bottom (30 to 80 Hz), and then allow the bass guitar (or acoustic bass) to dominate the higher frequencies, like from 100 Hz up. To get 30 Hz into a mic', you've simply got to have a big bass drum, unless you're one heck of an inventive engineer with expensive audio gear.

Thanks to some of the more adventurous drum makers (both large and small), with follow-through by the players themselves, there is much experimentation taking place with drumsets and drum designs. I'm personally thrilled to see drummers with small toms but a big bass drum, or big toms with more standard, old-fashioned bass drum sizes. Some are even muffling their bass drums with just a felt strip instead of a pillow, like in the '60s.

A few drummers back then used to place shredded newspapers inside their bass drum. Motown drumming (and much jazz as well) has the bass drum tuned to a beautiful tone—a pitch, even a *note*. This jazz or Motown sound is kind of like a "dimp" or a "dump" sound, which sits inside the mix of the rhythm section rather than being more solely a foundation to the song. The bass guitar wins the bottom-

end war in those Motown mixes, and it's a beautiful thing.

I get tingly just thinking about how guys like Bernard Purdie can feather a bass drum and then lay into it really hard for a *huge* downbeat. Guys like Purdie, Steve Jordan, Bill Stewart, and so many more have a touch on their instruments that goes beyond "winning" the bass guitar/bass drum wars. Their focus is the music itself, and their dynamics and touch emphasize that music.

The Sound

We don't need a mechanical device to play with our hands, but we do need one to play a bass drum. This means that if you have the same pedal that Abe uses, you'll get his sound, right? Wrong. (And I love this about music.) Drumming is an art form in which each great drummer's touch goes with him. How cool is that? But how frustrating is it for someone trying to get that Bonham or Purdie sound!

Well, let's forget about the notes for now and just work on a sound. Go to your drum room and set up your bass drum. Play the drum in different places in the room until you hear more bottom end—more bass. If possible, this is where you should set up your drums. Perhaps down the road, a sonic expert will be able to help you gain better bass control in your practice room, but until then just pick the spot that sounds good to you.

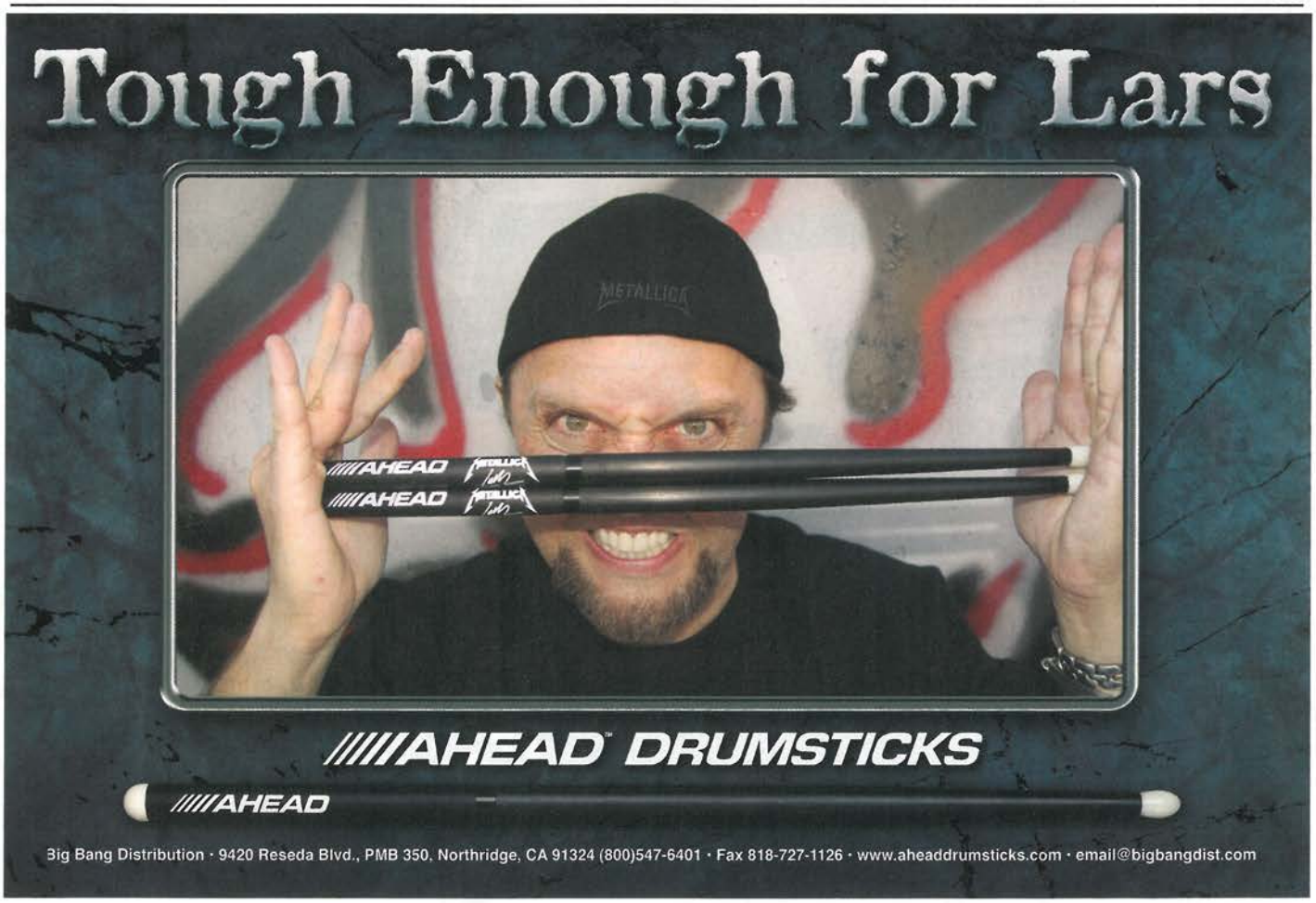
Now start experimenting with heads, muffling, beaters, and pedal tension, and *record* your progress. This is not time wasted, it's time well spent. This is ear training, and you're learning about your personal instruments. After forty-three years of playing drums, I will probably spend more than one hundred hours this year experimenting with my bass drum tunings. I'm always trying to learn more about tuning and what I can do to get more dynamics, pitch, or tone out of them.

So maybe size doesn't matter. But putting the work in and using one's ears does. I've worked (and still work) hard at gaining as much tone from my feet as possible. I believe that I can get more bottom end from my 20" bass drum than many drummers can get with 24"s or 26"s. Why? Well, for one thing, I never bury my beater (unless I'm messing up and am nervous or something). I've also learned about my bass drums and what they like—what heads they prefer and what kind of muffling sounds best for certain music styles.

Sure, you might not own that latest space-age pedal, and you might wish your drums were the same as Abe's (or bigger). I believe the only thing that really and truly holds each of us back is our ears. Work on your ears. Listen carefully to bass drums on records and examine how they sonically interact with the other instruments. Great music is about many more things than pattern studies!

When it comes to gear, we all wish for better things. Heck, I want a 60" bass drum—and I want somebody to make a couple of heads for it too! Just imagine *that* bottom end. But then I'll need somebody to carry it for me...and how do I get that Elvin "ping" sound out of a 60" bass drum?

Billy Ward has worked with Carly Simon, Robbie Robertson, Ace Frehley, John Patitucci, and Joan Osborne. His book, Inside Out: Exploring The Mental Aspects Of Drumming, *was recently released by Modern Drummer Publications. He also has a new DVD out,* Big Time. *Billy can be reached at his Web site, www.billyward.com.*



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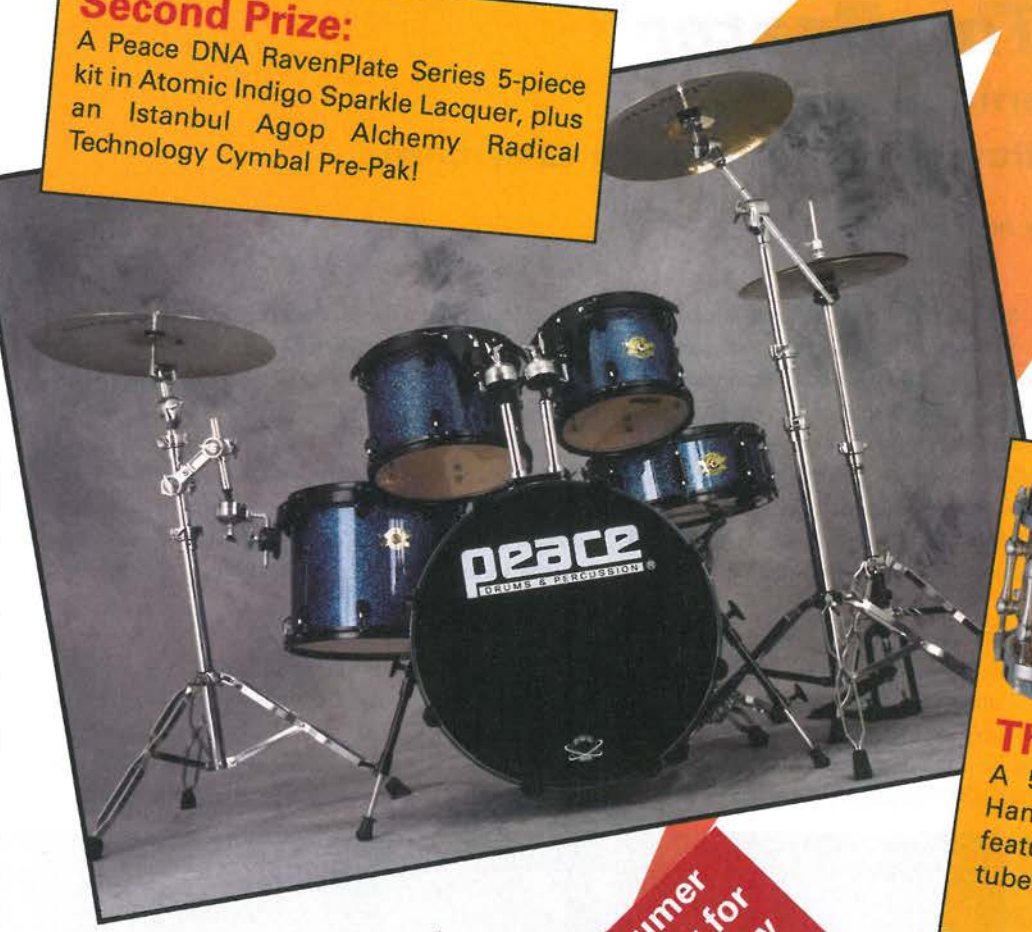

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MODERN DRUMMER

From The Bottom Up

Unburying The Beater

Bass Drum Technique For Speed, Fluidity, And Dynamic Control

Text by Matt Ritter/photos by Ivan Drucker

For years, I struggled to find a bass drum technique that worked for me. I tried heel down, but double strokes felt overly difficult. I tried heel up, "burying the beater" against the head, but it gave me a choked bass drum sound. Then I began hearing a lot of drummers—even heel-up players—talking about "allowing the beater to rebound off of the head." This concept kept popping up in drumming articles, and I was intrigued. Unfortunately, no one seemed to explain how to do it.

Like a detective, I searched for clues to this mysterious method of playing heel up without "burying the beater." I studied drumming videos, consulted with great players, and experimented with countless foot positions and movements. Eventually I arrived at a technique that completely changed my drumming. It has given me an effortless approach to double strokes, a broad dynamic range, a sense of fluidity, and a pure drum tone. I call this technique "*un*burying the beater."

There are certainly other ways to play the bass drum effectively. Unburying the beater is simply the one that has worked best for me after trying numerous methods. I hope it will offer another option to drummers who've had bass drum frustrations similar to my own.

A Solid Foundation

Most cymbal stands feature a tripod base. This is because three equally-spaced points of balance make for a very stable configuration. With this in mind, look at *your* three points of balance: the seat

and the two pedals. Arrange these items to form an equilateral triangle. (See photo 1.)

Notice that the bass drum is *not* the front of the drumset. This can be a revelation after years of seeing drumset photographs that feature the bass drum front and center. When the seat and pedals are arranged as a triangle, the bass drum is clearly off to one side and the hi-hat is off to the other! "Front and center" of the drumset is actually *between* the bass drum and the hi-hat. (See photo 2.) It may seem trivial, but this "bass drum is the front of the drumset" myth leads many drummers to twist their backs and their knees. Trying to face the bass drum, they end up hurting themselves or being perpetually uncomfortable.

Reaching New Heights

Adjust the seat height so that your hips are an inch or two higher than your knees. You'll be sitting slightly higher than you would be if your thighs were parallel to the ground. This provides added leverage that will increase your strength and endurance. Not convinced? Squat down so that your thighs are parallel to the floor. Have someone place a heavy barbell on your shoulders. Now stand up. Repeat this experiment from a squatting position that is slightly higher. Which lift felt easier? Of course, sitting *too* high is not ideal either; it could threaten your balance by distorting your stable, triangular base. Keeping your hips an inch or two higher than your knees generally provides a good middle ground.

Have A Seat

Position yourself solidly in the center of your seat cushion. Some teachers advocate sitting on the front edge of the throne. That works fine when your feet are providing most of your balance, as with the heel-down technique or the "burying the beater" method of playing heel-up. Unburying the

beater will require your bass drum leg to be slightly freer of support responsibilities. Therefore, you need to feel centered and stable on your seat.

Ya Put Your Bass Foot In...

Position your hi-hat foot however you normally would, and position your bass drum foot so that your toe is about two inches back from the chain or strap of the bass drum pedal. (See photo 3.) Now tweak the position of your throne so that each knee is slightly *behind* its respective ankle. (See photo 4.) You may have to scoot back a bit. This prevents your feet from feeling cramped up without any leverage.

At this point, the heel of your bass drum foot may be off the back of the pedal. That's okay. Hopefully, this foot position has left the beater resting in the air a few inches off the batter head. If the beater is *not* a few inches off of the drumhead, tighten the tension on the pedal. Also, make sure that you are not actively pushing your foot down. Your foot and leg must be completely at rest. In fact, I call this position of the foot,

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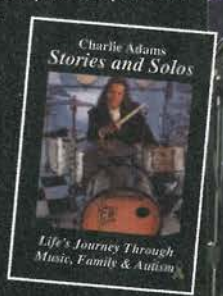

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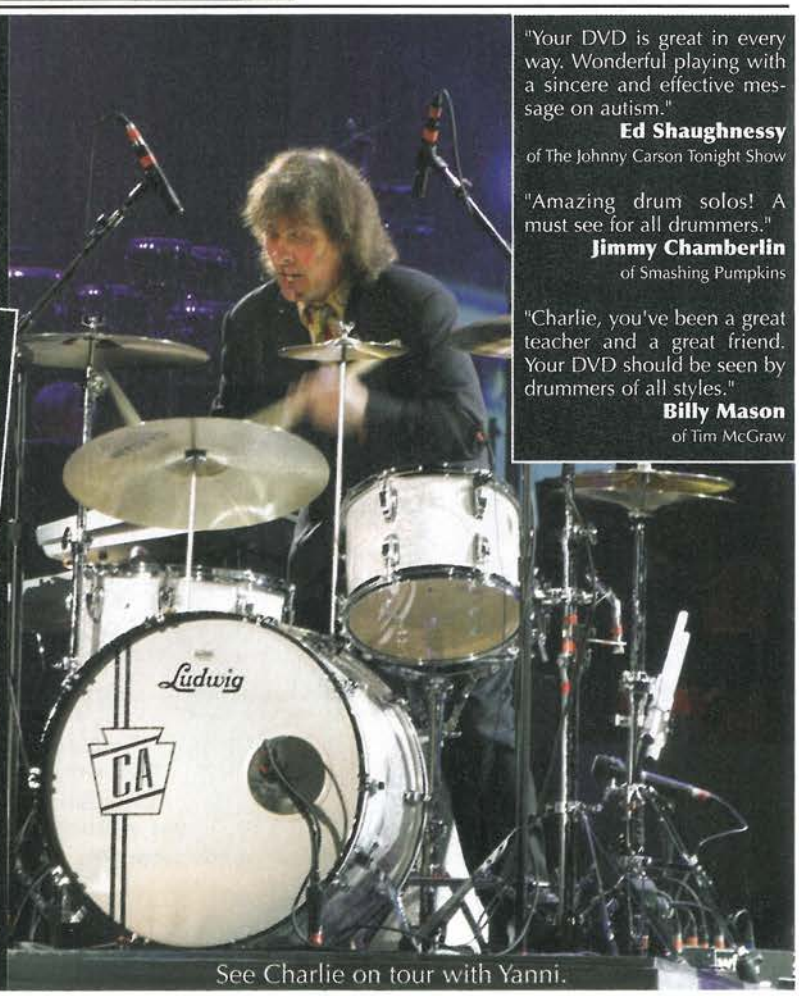

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See Charlie on tour with Yanni.

the leg, and the beater "the resting position." (See photo 5.)

And Away We Go

Gently lift the heel of your bass drum foot, keeping the ball of your foot in contact with the pedal. (See photo 6.) It is important to watch the beater, making sure that it does not move forward. We want it to stay at the resting position or to come slightly *back*. Yes, you may feel like you're holding your leg up. If you're unable to do this without falling, try sitting further back on your seat or using your hi-hat foot to stabilize you more.

Next, *keep your heel raised off of the pedal* and lightly pump your leg to play continuous 8th notes at about quarter note = 90. Make the beater bounce freely and smoothly against the batter head. When done correctly, this will feel like dribbling a basketball with your leg. If the beater makes any jerky motions or buzzes against the head, concentrate more on gently following the beater's natural rebound. You are sensitizing yourself to the movement of the pedal.

Once you can do this, practice dribbling the beater at various tempos. To play 8th notes at tempos above quarter note = 120, I find it easier to dribble from the ankle rather than the leg. I keep my leg motionless in the air while my foot does all of the movement. This subtle switch lets me reach tempos up to about quarter note = 220.

Keys To The Kingdom

Here's where we transform your beater sensitivity into a practical bass drum technique. Again, pump your leg to play 8th notes at quarter note = 90. This time, however, play just six strokes. For the sixth and final stroke, drop your heel to the ground and *completely relax your leg and foot*. (See again photo 5.) Watch as the beater makes a note and then returns to the resting position, a few inches off of the head. Note that the heel is not dropped *just after* the stroke. The dropping of the heel actually *is* the stroke. This may take several tries to get right. Trust me—after a few minutes, you'll be able to produce a note while simultaneously returning your foot and the beater to the resting position. This allows the leg to relax between bass drum passages.

Do the same exercise with five strokes in a row, four strokes in a row, and so forth. In each case, execute the final stroke by dropping the heel, causing the beater to snap against the head and return to the resting position. When you do this exercise with just two strokes in a row, you're practicing your double-stroke technique! *Very* fast doubles can be achieved this way. Sometimes it's also helpful to slide your foot slightly forward as you drop your heel for the second note.

For a single stroke, you basically do the same as you did for the final stroke of the previous, multiple-stroke exercises. Lift your heel (remember to watch the beater so that it doesn't move forward) and make the note by dropping your heel, letting your foot and the beater return to the resting position.

Yeah, But What If...?

After discussing single, double, and multiple strokes, there is another variation to consider. Often, we need to play a double stroke immediately followed by more bass drum activity. We can't drop into the resting position on the second note of the double stroke because we can't afford to rest; we have more notes to play! In such cases, we can execute the double stroke by using our toe for the first note (see photo 7) and the ball of our foot for the second note (photo 8). This creates a dropping motion that's similar to the motion of dropping our heel. Again, a slight forward slide is sometimes helpful. And as always, we allow the beater to bounce off of the head with each note. The difference is that the toe/ball technique leaves us with our heel *still in the air*. Thus, we are able to continue with one or more notes before finally dropping to the resting position.

With practice, the nuances of "unburying the beater" become intuitive, offering a powerful technique that cooperates with the natural rebound of the beater. If your experience mirrors my own, this will give you tremendous speed, fluidity, and dynamic control. Best of luck.

Matt Ritter has toured extensively as a musical theater drummer and has played for countless Broadway performers. As a jazz drummer, he has worked with such artists as pianist/composer Robert Silverman and bass great Ron McClure. For more information, visit www.MattRitterMusic.com.

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From The Bottom Up

Drumhead Art

Where To Get The Look You Want

by Billy Amendola

Over the years, the front heads of bass drums have been billboards for everything from a drummer's initials to exotic artwork. After all, what better way to get your band's name, Web site, or musical image before a viewing audience? (C'mon...we all know everyone is looking at the drummer anyway, right?)

To get you started on your own quest for a killer bass drum "statement," here's a look at some of the coolest companies making drumhead art today.

DrumART.com

DrumART.com makes two types of custom bass drum logos—full heads and removable artwork. Both methods start out as computer graphics printed on ultra-thin vinyl. The company can handle any digital file format, and they don't charge extra for scanning, image retouching, raster-to-vector conversion, or image enhancement.

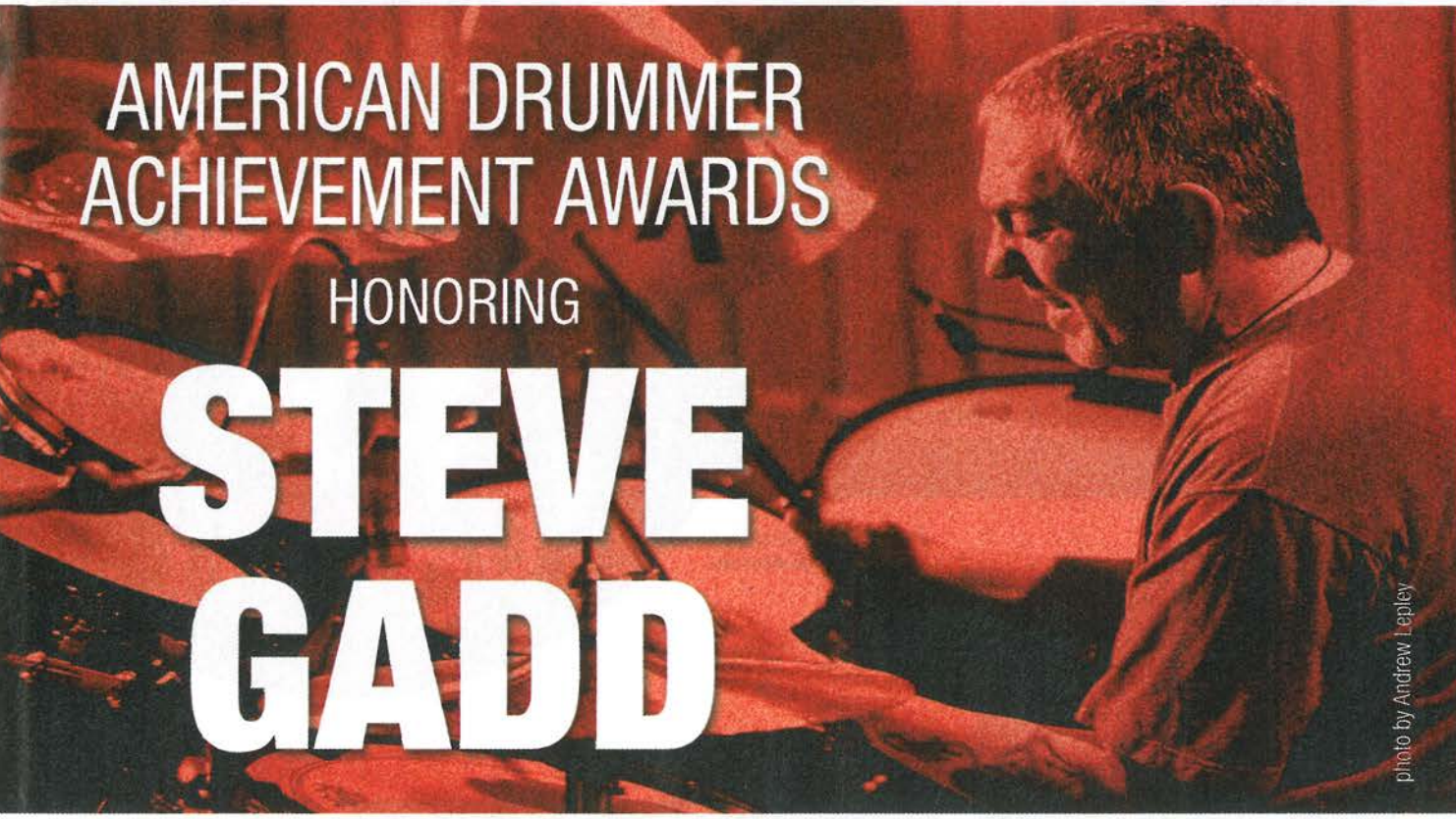
The vinyl decals are clear-coated and applied directly to the head or to a special removable material. Designs can be cut to shape so as to minimize the amount of material applied to the head, or printed at full-head size to ensure consistency of color throughout the head. DrumART.com uses Aquarian drumheads exclusively.

The company says they ship heads within a week of receiving final approval of the artwork. Delivery time to any location in the country is two to three business days. Removable custom bass drum logos cost $50 for heads up to 24", and $55 for larger heads. Full-head artwork costs $85 on heads up to 24", $95 on larger heads.

(877) 378-6278, jim@drumart.com, www.drumART.com.

DrumART.com creates full-head graphics like the ones shown here, as well as removable logos.

THE HUDSON MUSIC DVD COLLECTION



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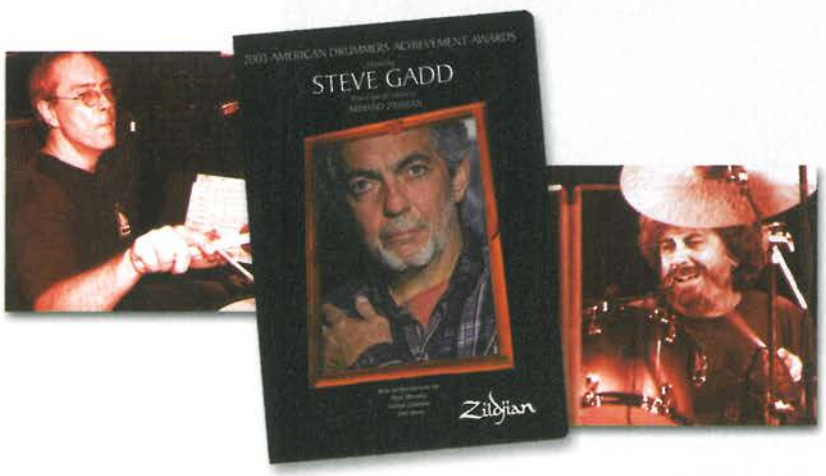

In recognition of Steve Gadd's incredible impact on the art of drumming and music, on September 13, 2003, the Avedis Zildjian company presented Steve with an American Drummers Achievement Award (ADAA) at the Berklee Performance Center in Boston, MA— an historic evening that also included a special tribute to the late **Armand Zildjian**.

This once-in-a-lifetime event was hosted by **Mr. Bill Cosby** and featured an all-star band that included **Vinnie Colaiuta** and **Rick Marotta** on drums, **Michael Landau, Jimmy Johnson, Larry Goldings** and special guest appearances by **Will Lee** and **Tom Scott**. The evening culminated in an incredible performance by Steve with **James Taylor**.

The double-disc DVD features over six hours of footage, including the evening's great performances, exclusive rehearsal footage; a 20-minute documentary on Steve's career, backstage interviews, rare, early film footage of Steve and more.

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Presented in association with Zildjian

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Jakes Garage

Jakes Garage computer-creates drumhead graphics. Designs are then output to a large-format printer that produces crisp images on 3-mil vinyl. A scratch-resistant coating is then put over the image and a permanent adhesive is applied to the vinyl. At that point the graphic is ready to be mounted on the drumhead. (The company says this process offers the best tonal control.)

Drumhead graphics start at $79.95 for text style or a ready-to-print PhotoShop file of your design. Custom-designed graphics start at $135. These prices cover the ready-to-mount graphic. Jakes Garage says they can also mount the graphic for you on your choice of drumhead, for an extra charge. Turnaround time is usually one week.

(800) 645-9182, plan.b@mindspring.com, www.jakesgarage.com.

Jakes Garage specializes in images with character.

Remo

In addition to a selection of stock logos and designs, Remo's custom graphics department can create virtually any drumhead graphic through their "advanced digital photo-imaging techniques." Drumheads can be made from camera-ready physical art (such as typesetting, layouts, photographs, or transparencies) or from digital images. Contact the company for specifications.

Due to the unique technology required to make custom graphic heads, they cannot be made as PowerStroke, Pinstripe, or other varieties. They are, in fact, unique 3-ply heads. Additionally, all Remo graphic heads must display the Remo crown logo somewhere on the face of the head. The company's graphics department will adjust the size and placement of the logo so as not to interfere with the head's graphic content. Customers should allow approximately eight weeks for delivery.

Heads with stock graphics are priced from $66.50 for an 18" size to $92.50 for a 28" size. Custom bass drum heads range from $106.50 for a 16" size to $311.50 for a 40" size. Remo laminates the graphics into the film before the head is made, so orders must be pre-paid. No exchanges, refunds, or credits will be accepted. Custom artwork is also subject to a graphic editing charge.

(661) 294-5600, www.remo.com.

Remo's graphic heads feature images that are laminated into the head itself.

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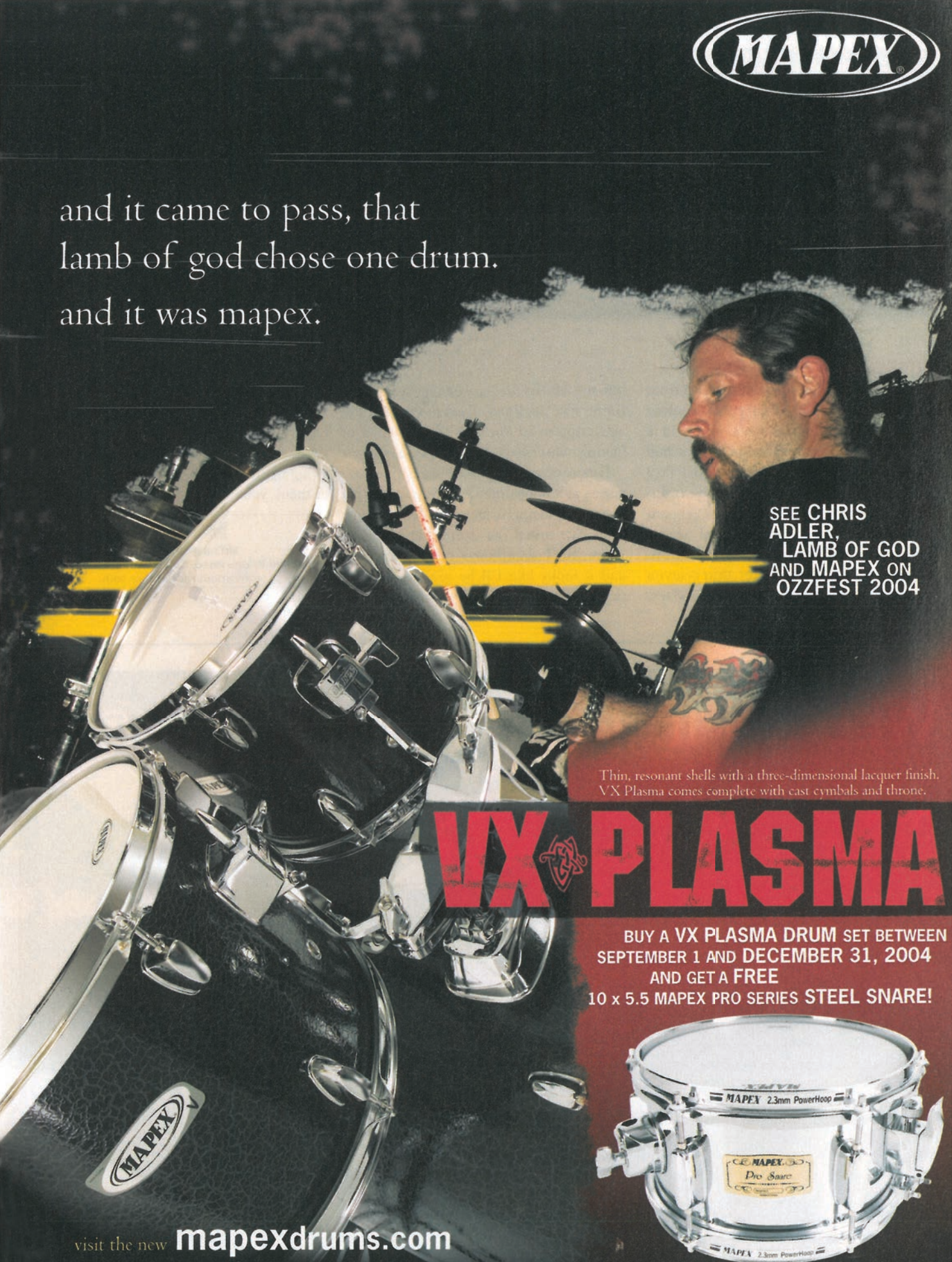

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HeadFirst has created graphic drumheads for several artists on major tours.

HeadFirst

HeadFirst can work directly from a file, or one-on-one with the customer via email/proofs. Graphic heads are produced from any digital files, flat art, or three-dimensional items (including T-shirts, models, and watercolors). The company's digital process transfers the image directly to a very thin sheet of vinyl with a microporous surface and a matching protective overlaminate. The image is then laminated to an Attack single-ply head. HeadFirst will cut any size hole in the head for no additional charge. The reverse side of the hole is protected with a PVC protective ring at no cost, or Holz reinforcements can be provided and installed for an additional fee.

HeadFirst says their goal is for every player to be able to afford their product. Average cost to create usable art is $30–$40. (The most expensive art project the company has done ran approximately $100 in art fees.) The cost of the head is additional.

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The company's online catalog shows hundreds of pre-designed images. Custom designs on ready-to-print digital files can also be used. (Contact the company for specifications.) VividHead also offers advanced instructions and downloadable templates on their Web site. In addition, the company offers monogrammed shield crest logos made with a drummer's initials for a vintage look.

VividHead cannot print onto mesh, calfskin, or clear plastic heads (for transparent-looking images). The company insists drummers obtain a signed release from the owner to use any trademarked or copyrighted image. A proof for final approval will be emailed within two to three days. Orders normally ship in seven to twelve working days. The company also offers rush services.

A 22" catalog VividHead costs $86. Band names can be added (with over 140 fonts to choose from) for an additional $50. A custom head made from a ready-to-print digital file costs $120; a custom-designed head created by the company's designer costs $200 and up. Mic' holes can be installed for $8–$24.

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Eminent Grafix frequently creates graphic heads for Orange County Drum & Percussion customers and artists.

Eminent Grafix

Eminent Grafix offers all digital design capabilities. (Contact the company for file specifications.) Eminent says they can take any of more than a thousand fonts and modify them into a logo, or start from scratch. They can also create artwork from a faxed scribble.

Besides bass drum heads, Eminent creates vinyl graphics, digital print, gradient airbrushed decals, and wood burning on shells for a "tattoo" look. All of their work can be incorporated onto drum wraps as well.

Drumhead graphics start at $50 for simple, ready-to-go files (plus the cost of the drumhead, which is around $25). Beyond that, everything is custom pricing. Most work for bass drum heads does not exceed $150.

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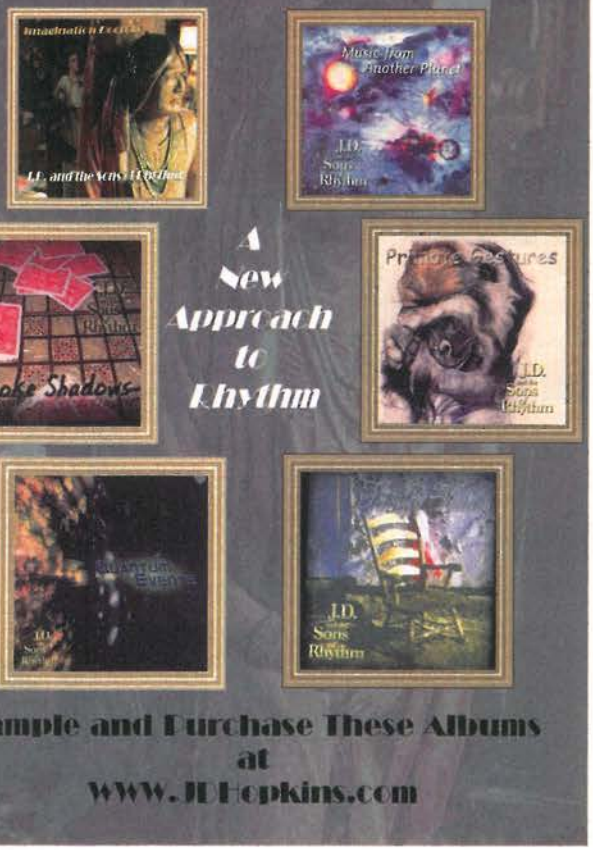

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The Art Of Self-Promotion

Part 3: Mailing Lists And Newsletters

by Michael Bettine

For any sort of musical endeavor, fans are a lifeline. They buy your products, go to your performances, and help spread the word about your music. Consequently, I'm surprised at how many people don't see their fans as a resource—and an eager one at that. Let's take a look at how you can build your fan base through the effective use of a mailing list and a newsletter.

Creating A Mailing List

A mailing list is a direct link to your fan base. The easiest way to start one is by having a sign-up sheet at your performances. The best place to have it is where you sell your CDs, T-shirts, and other promotional material, if in fact you offer those things at gigs. Otherwise, place the sign-up sheet near the venue's entrance or exit, with a sign drawing attention to it. Also, don't forget to announce during your performance that interested parties can sign up on your mailing list.

These days, nearly everyone has a computer and a decent-quality printer, so there is no excuse for hand-written signs and list forms. The only thing handwritten that people find endearing is a thank-you note. A printed sign or form simply looks more professional than one scrawled out with a marking pen.

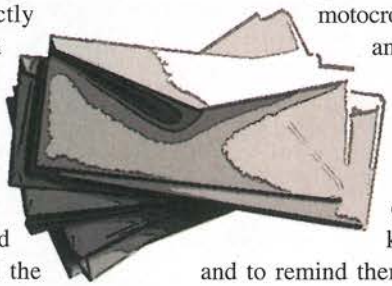
If you don't think you have artistic talent enough to create your own signs and forms, there are various books on graphic design out there. A great one to invest in is *The Non-Designer's Design Book*, by Robin Williams (www.peachpitpress.com). The author goes through the basics of graphic layout, including design and typography. You can achieve professional results by following her examples.

The sign-up sheet can be a simple form that has a place for the person's name and email address. You can expand it with their mailing address and telephone number. In these days of spam and junk mail, some people may be hesitant to give you *any* information. But those who enjoyed your performance will likely want to be kept current on your musical activities. Your Web site can also have a place to sign up for a newsletter. The idea here is to create a database from which you'll be able to contact your fans directly. And besides those fans, be sure to add various club owners and industry contacts you've made, as well as anyone who has an interest in your music.

Email is the easiest and most cost-effective way to maintain a mailing list. There are various software programs to help you manage names and addresses. The beauty of this is that you're probably already connected to the Internet, and you most likely have a Web site. So the hardest part is actually getting the names and addresses entered into your email program. But once they're in there, they're there for good. You can assemble them into a file, and then hit one button to send your message out to the entire list.

Creating A Newsletter

Once you have your mailing list all set up and ready to go, what do you do with it? The most important thing is to start a newsletter, which is exactly what the name implies: a letter that contains news.



You probably already receive newsletters related to music or hobbies that you like. Take a good look at them, and evaluate their format and the type of information they contain. The best way to learn how to do things is by seeing what others do.

What works well is to have a regular monthly mailing, with occasional special mailings for important announcements. This way people who want to keep up with what you're doing will start to look forward to your newsletter.

What do you put in your newsletter? Again, we can follow the who/what/when/where formula we've utilized in earlier articles for creating press releases and promo packs.

Who And What

Include items about yourself or your bandmembers. Maybe someone bought a new instrument, guested on a gig or a recording, took an interesting vacation, or has an unusual hobby. Maybe you're into motocross racing and you won second place in a race. The things you do are interesting to your fans. You can also announce that your CD is finally out, or that new T-shirts are available. I've even known people to include favorite recipes, stories about funny or weird things that happened to them, or hobby tips.

If you have a new review, you can include it or quote from it. You can also include letters or comments from fans. Remember: *anything* can be news.

When And Where

This part of the newsletter can cover your performance schedule, any sort of personal appearances (you're at that motocross race on the 14th), and any other dates of significance. If you're going to be somewhere, let your fans know. The idea is to keep your name in front of people, to let them know you're out there, and to remind them that something's happening. Even if nothing exciting seems to be going on, you can say things like, "We're currently writing songs for our upcoming CD, and we look forward to playing them live soon." Just keep that personal contact and show that you're as interested in your fans as you want them to be in you.

Some people divide their mailing lists up by geographical areas. This way they can send special "reminder" notices about specific performances to people who live nearby: "Remember, the John Cross Trio will be at Payton's in Columbus this Thursday, the 12th. We'll be playing songs from our new CD, *Border Crossing*, and we look forward to seeing you there!" That's all you need to say. It makes contact and reminds people of your appearance.

I've said it before, but it bears repeating: Remember to have someone proofread and spellcheck everything you write. Nothing looks more unprofessional than errors in spelling and grammar. And as always, include *all* of your contact information at the bottom of your newsletter.

After reading all three installments of this series, you should have one or more succinct but impressive press releases, a dynamite promo pack, and an entertaining newsletter. Armed with all this self-promotion material, you should be ready to take your local music scene by storm. Good luck!

The Dillinger Escape Plan's Chris Pennie

Man-Machine

Hardcore, speed metal, thrash punk, grind, metal-core—whatever random rock subgenre tag you feel like throwing on The Dillinger Escape Plan, just make sure it sticks firmly to the band's frenetic compositions and unyielding sonic fury. Sprouting from northern New Jersey in the late '90s, The Dillinger Escape Plan effectively melded traditional East Coast hardcore dynamics with technical complexities of speed metal groups, bebop jazz combos, and even avant-garde classical composers.

At the center of the chaotic guitar phrasings and blaring, cathartic vocals is drummer Chris Pennie. As the captain of a crazed musical vessel, Pennie's main responsibility is to appease the other four Escape Plan members, accompanying their angular, jagged riffs with his own array of accents and punches, all the while maintaining a steady, solid foundation.

Story by Waleed Rashidi

Photos by Rick Malkin

As intense as the aforementioned might sound, Pennie actually does it one better. Scan through his latest CD with the band, *Miss Machine*, and you'll find that he'll toss in a series of tasteful cymbal colors amidst a sea of distorted six-string artillery. He'll amazingly and seamlessly insert a serene groove to soothe an otherwise gaping wound of a track. And his ability to change personas from a delicate, considerate percussionist to a drummer waging all-out war is one of the absolute best in the business, even if it seems like Pennie's suffering from a serious bout of multiple-personality syndrome.

Fortunately, Pennie's mental ability is anything but off-kilter. In fact, the sheer amount of individual phrases and irregular accents penned for one Dillinger Escape Plan song is enough to suggest Mensa membership for the humble and personable drummer, who has crammed many an intense, complex composition into his head. Amazingly, nothing, he says, is transcribed or mapped out. "It's memory. We just keep writing and playing until we have them down."

Pennie also maintains that the numerous parts that whiz by are intentionally and methodically placed primarily for the sake of the challenge. And bear in mind, Pennie doesn't just perform the part with enough skill to get by. He goes beyond it, presenting his work on a sonic equivalent of a silver platter. "This is a band where we challenge ourselves to do whatever we want," he insists.

What's perhaps most surprising is that the drummer says he's not really influenced by many drummers. "If I were to be influenced by anybody, I'd have to say it wasn't drummers," Pennie insists. "I'm more influenced by producers or people with drum machines, like Aphex Twin or DJ Shadow."

Still, one listen to *Miss Machine* and you'll realize that Pennie is anything but the mechanical percussion he listens to. His well-balanced merger of attack, accents, restraint, dynamics, speed, grace, and technicality is downright unparalleled. Question is, as a trailblazing pioneer in rock drumming, does Pennie hold the keys to the future of the next generation of extreme performers behind the kit? Only time will tell.

MD: *Miss Machine* appears to be quite a daunting project to assemble. How much time did you invest in writing the album?

Chris: It took a while. It's kind of hard to really put a finger on the exact time it took, because we split up the sessions. We did a little bit here and there while we were between tours.

We started recording about a year ago. We did some tracks with the drums and guitars, about five of them. Then we went on tour, tracked another two or three in the fall, and finished up all the basic rhythm tracks by December. From there, we worked on the vocals in our rehearsal space. We finished mixing in May, but all the while before that we worked on the electronics and ear candy. There was just tons of stuff we'd been working on right up 'til the last minute.

MD: The material that the band plays must definitely put you, as a drummer, in the songwriting process, much more so than your typical rock drummer. Everything seems so calculated and scrutinized. How does the process get its initial start?

Chris: It might start with an idea I'm working on by myself, which I'll bring to practice. Ben [Weinman, guitarist] and I write everything. He and I put the basic ideas together, and everything else comes in later. Ben and I have been doing this for so long that we know how to work with each other. One of us will come to practice with an idea, and with each other's input, an idea will really progress and morph into something exciting.

MD: How much practice time do you get?

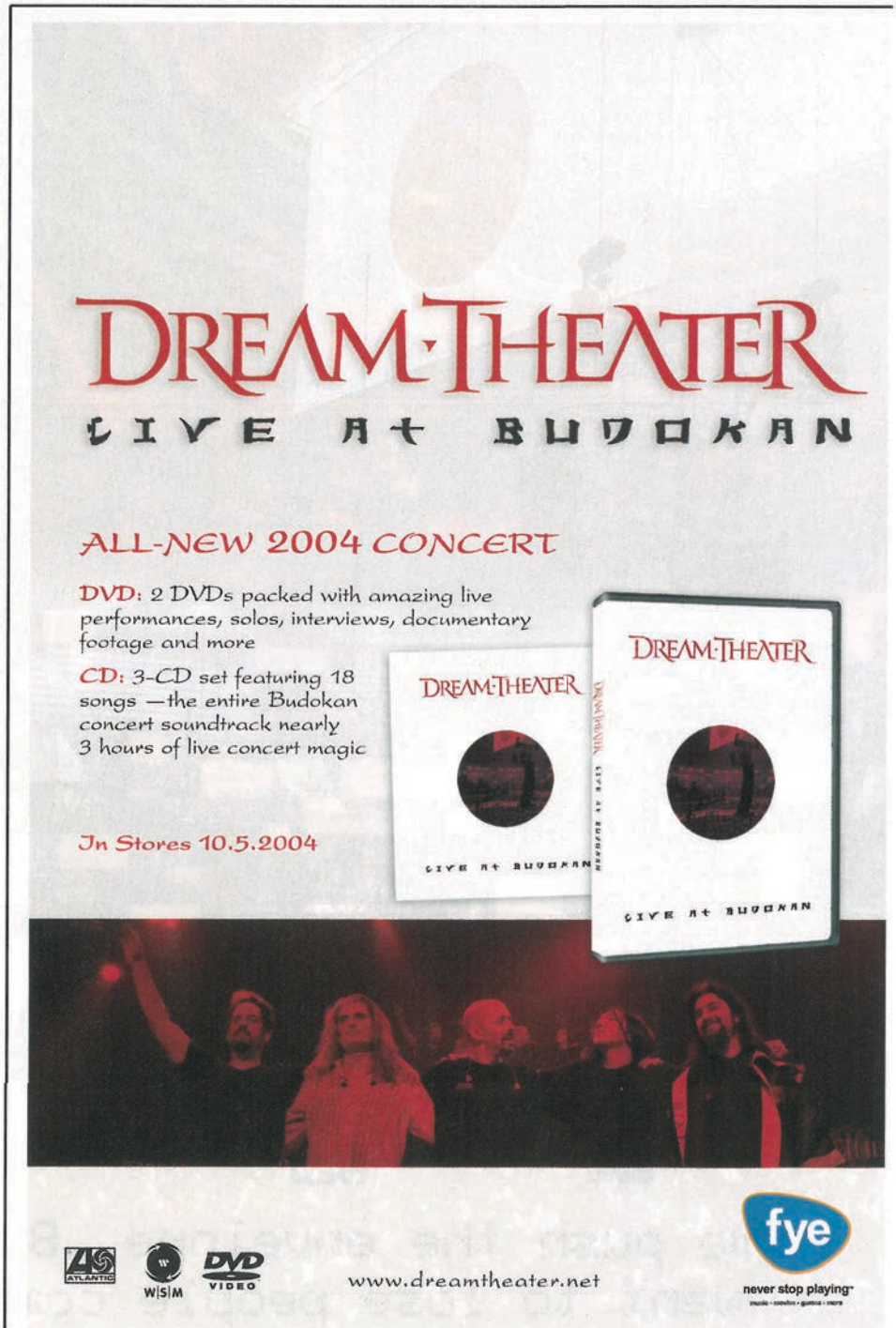
Chris: When we're home for a lengthy amount of time, I'll usually practice about three or four hours a day. It's a decent amount of time. But lately it's been really tough finding time to practice, with all the touring we've been doing. We're constantly on the road, trying to reach new people and different markets.

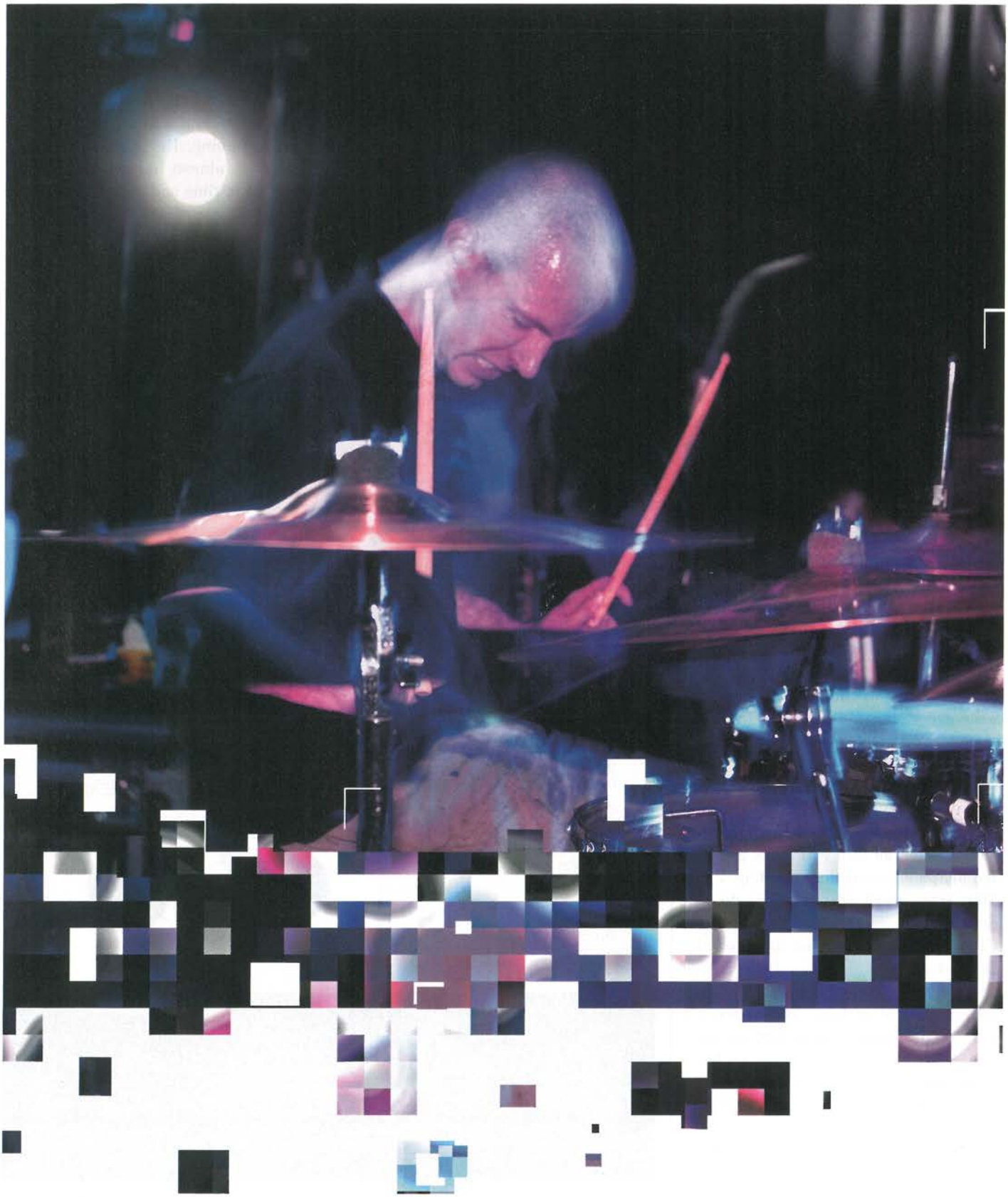
MD: What would you say was the most challenging part of creating *Miss Machine*?

Chris: There were a couple of things. In "We Are The Storm," after all the intros, there's a flurry of fills and stuff that go into a half-time section. And then it breaks down into a syncopated vibe—not really a groove, but another flurry of notes with a lot of independence, which requires me to break up my feet double-bass wise, instead of rolling with my right and left foot.

I'll do patterns where I'm playing a five-note grouping and combining it with a seven, and I'm playing so fast that the notes and meters are whizzing by. Getting it all to come across accurately was one of the most challenging parts of making the record. I had to really concentrate to make it sound even.

On "Setting Fire To Sleeping Giants," there's a Latin breakdown section. That was a challenge, just to get the feel. Also, in the beginning, I'm playing some different rolls, almost like press rolls. And to hit that in time and at the speed we're playing it at was also a challenge. I needed to make sure my hands were in shape. That said, I think that overall, there are tunes on *Miss Machine* that are more





"We push the envelope. But we don't want to lose people completely."

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laid-back than anything we've ever done before.

MD: Like on "Unretrofied"?

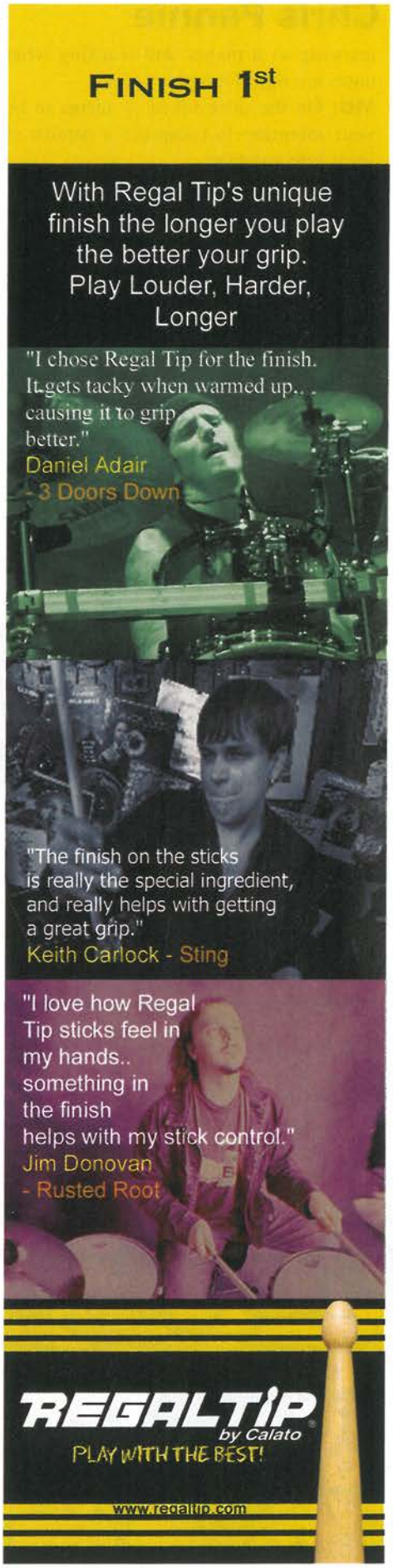
Chris: Yeah. I like that tune because it shows everybody that I can groove. That wasn't really a huge challenge, but I thought it was great because I could sit back and lay on a groove and let someone else take the focus of the song. It was awesome for me as a *musician*.

MD: How far do you like to push your band's material?

Chris: We like to have elements of chaos as well as technique in our music. I think that's something we've always been about, and we do it on *Miss Machine*. We push the envelope. But we don't want to lose people completely, so sometimes we'll back off just a bit, into a half-time phrase or a nice grooving section. I don't know, I think the biggest thing for us is not to try and overdo it with all of the technicality all of the time. Too much of that is just overkill.

MD: Yeah, your parts always seem to end at the proper moment.

Chris: A lot of time it's just a matter of taste, and I think over time we've learned how to complement each other musically. That's just something that comes with



Chris Pennie

growing as a player and learning what notes are right for a given part.

MD: On the same token, it seems to be your intention to compress a wealth of ideas into one song.

Chris: Yes, definitely. We set out to challenge ourselves. For me it's challenging because we're doing something that touches on different styles, but in a really heavy context. There are elements of Latin and jazz in what we do. We'll take influences from bands like Tribal Tech or Tower Of Power—fusion or funk stuff—and incorporate that into what we do. I might take an involved funk beat that you might hear someone play on the hi-hat, but I'll play it in a much heavier way, like on a China cymbal.

MD: Speaking of your wide-ranging tastes, how did you get your start in drumming?

Chris: My first real introduction to drumming was Metallica's *...And Justice For All*. It's a drum-heavy album, and I just focused on Lars Ulrich's kick drums. I thought, "That's amazing. That dude's doing that stuff with his feet." I was fascinated by that. I was twelve years old, I got my first kit, and I started

Pennie For Your Thoughts

Recordings

Artist	Album
Dillinger Escape Plan	Under The Running Board
Dillinger Escape Plan	Calculating Infinity
Dillinger Escape Plan	Irony Is A Dead Scene
Dillinger Escape Plan	Miss Machine

Favorites

Artist	Album	Drummer
The Police	Synchronicity	Stewart Copeland
Metallica	...And Justice For All	Lars Ulrich
Cynic	Focus	Sean Reinhart
DJ Shadow	Entroducing	samples
Unkle	Psyence Fiction	samples
Nine Inch Nails	The Fragile	Chris Vrenna
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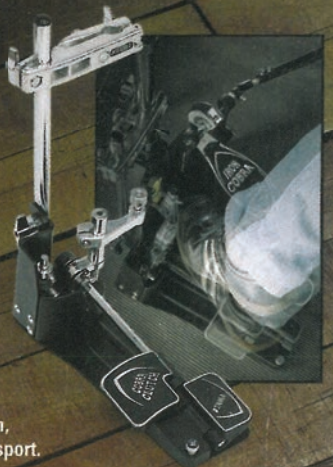

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Chris Pennie

taking lessons.

I went through a bunch of teachers, and I eventually found the right guy. He was just a local guy in North Jersey, but he turned me on to things outside of rock music. He told me I should really widen my playing. He gave me a lot of books, wrote out a bunch of ideas, and totally turned me on to all sorts of new stuff. That's when things really opened up for me. I thought, "This is totally what I want to do." I was seventeen at the time. And that was it. From there, I went to Berklee [College Of Music] for two years and majored in music synthesis.

MD: That's an interesting educational emphasis for a drummer.

Chris: I wanted to study something other than just performance. Besides, there are so many performance majors at Berklee that are killer players. I was there for two years and learned a lot, but I also felt like it wasn't exactly enough for me. I wanted to go play with people. I wanted to take what I'd learned and get into a band and *do* it.

While I was at Berklee, I stayed in touch with musicians I'd played with in

high school. When I got home from Berklee in the spring of '97, I started talking to some of them about doing something different. We were like, "Let's do something a little more off the cuff, a little bit noisier, and something with a little more attitude." And that's when Dillinger formed.

MD: So The Dillinger Escape Plan is really the first band you've been in that has had any degree of success?

Chris: Yes. I'd been in a bunch of local bands, all which had members that were in Dillinger at some point.

MD: When did the band become your full-time career?

Chris: We're not a mass-accepted band or a mainstream act, but by the winter of 2001 I was able to stop working my day job. I said, "I'm going for it. This is it. There's no turning back. I want to make this my full-time thing."

MD: It's interesting that, despite the intricacy of your performance, you've always used a small kit. You played for many years on a standard five-piece.

Chris: I did, but I've scaled down even more. I'm down to a three-piece now.

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It's ?uestlove-style, man.

MD: How, or why, did you opt to scale back that small?

Chris: I like the way things sound when you only have three pieces. There are no toms getting in the way of the sound that's coming up from the kick drum. Without rack toms, you really feel the kick drum's sound coming directly at you instead of out and around the kit.

We were playing a New Year's gig out in San Francisco two years ago with Mike Patton, and I had to use a rented kit. It really wasn't the best of kits—it was fine, it did the job, but the way the tom was mounted, it was way over to the left. I was like, alright, I'm not going to sacrifice moving my hi-hat and kick pedal just for that tom. So I decided to take the tom off the kit and just play with a three-piece. And ever since then I've liked the way it feels. It's cool because it's challenging for me. I had to re-think how I would stick everything, you know?

MD: Certainly, almost like an entire translation process, in a sense.

Chris: Exactly. And that's awesome to me. Billy Cobham or Dennis Chambers have said, "My set is never the same." That's because changing things around inspires creativity. Changing your setup is just a different way of looking at things. Also, sonically, a minimal kit sounds great. Our sound guy is like, "Dude, this is amazing. My job is so easy!" Of course, I'm not doing it for him. But instead of trying to mike that snare and having a tom in the way, he puts the mic' wherever he wants. I'm not saying I'll keep this setup forever, but it feels great right now.

MD: Getting into your drum sound, in general drummers who like to play at high speeds normally crank their snare drums for the sake of cutting through the mix. But you don't seem to subscribe to that school of thought. You seem to be doing just fine with a medium-pitched snare.

Chris: A high-pitched snare was something I might've subscribed to early on. Years back, everybody's snare had that really high tone that would cut through the mix. And even on our last full-length that we did, *Calculating Infinity*, I had a very dry, high-pitched snare. Being a lit-

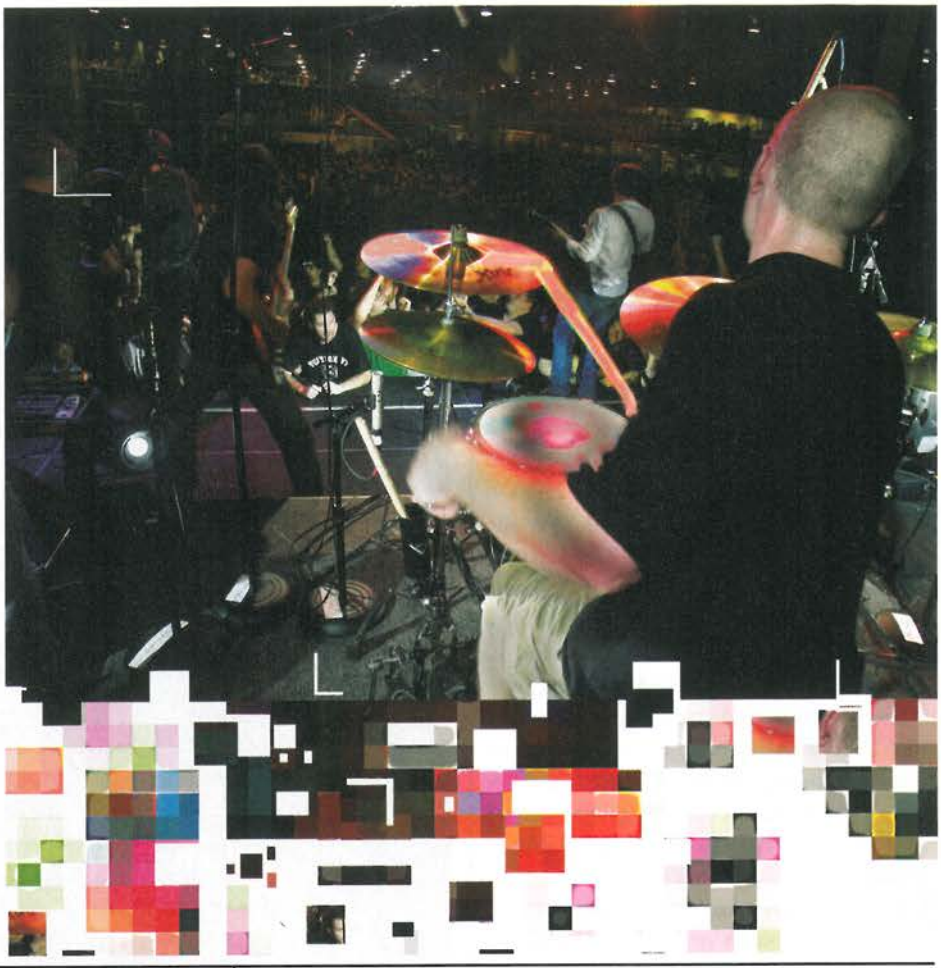
Chris Pennie

tle younger, I thought I needed tons of bounce-back off the head to get any action to work my technique and to help my hands play at that speed.

For *Miss Machine,* I used either a 5x14 brass Premier snare or a 6½x14. With both, I let them breathe a little bit more and have an open, natural tone. As for the playing, it wasn't really a problem. Learning to hit a little bit harder, through touring and building my stamina, made me want to try different stuff out and see what would work.

MD: Since you do play at extreme speeds, what thoughts do you have on stick selection?

Chris: I used a lot heavier stick a couple years ago, the Vater Virgil Donati model. That's a pretty big stick, but then I went down to Power 5Bs, which worked well. But now I'm coming back up, using Vater's new Extreme Design sticks, which are like Power 5Bs but with a bit more length and front-end weight. They work really well for me because I can get a whip action with them and a little more of a bounce back off the head.



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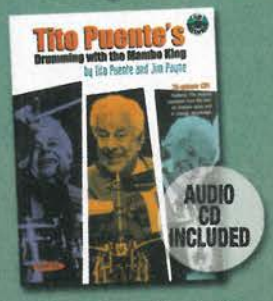

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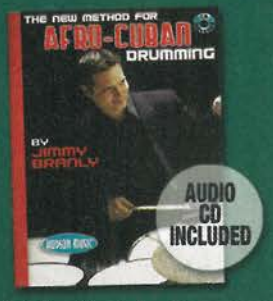

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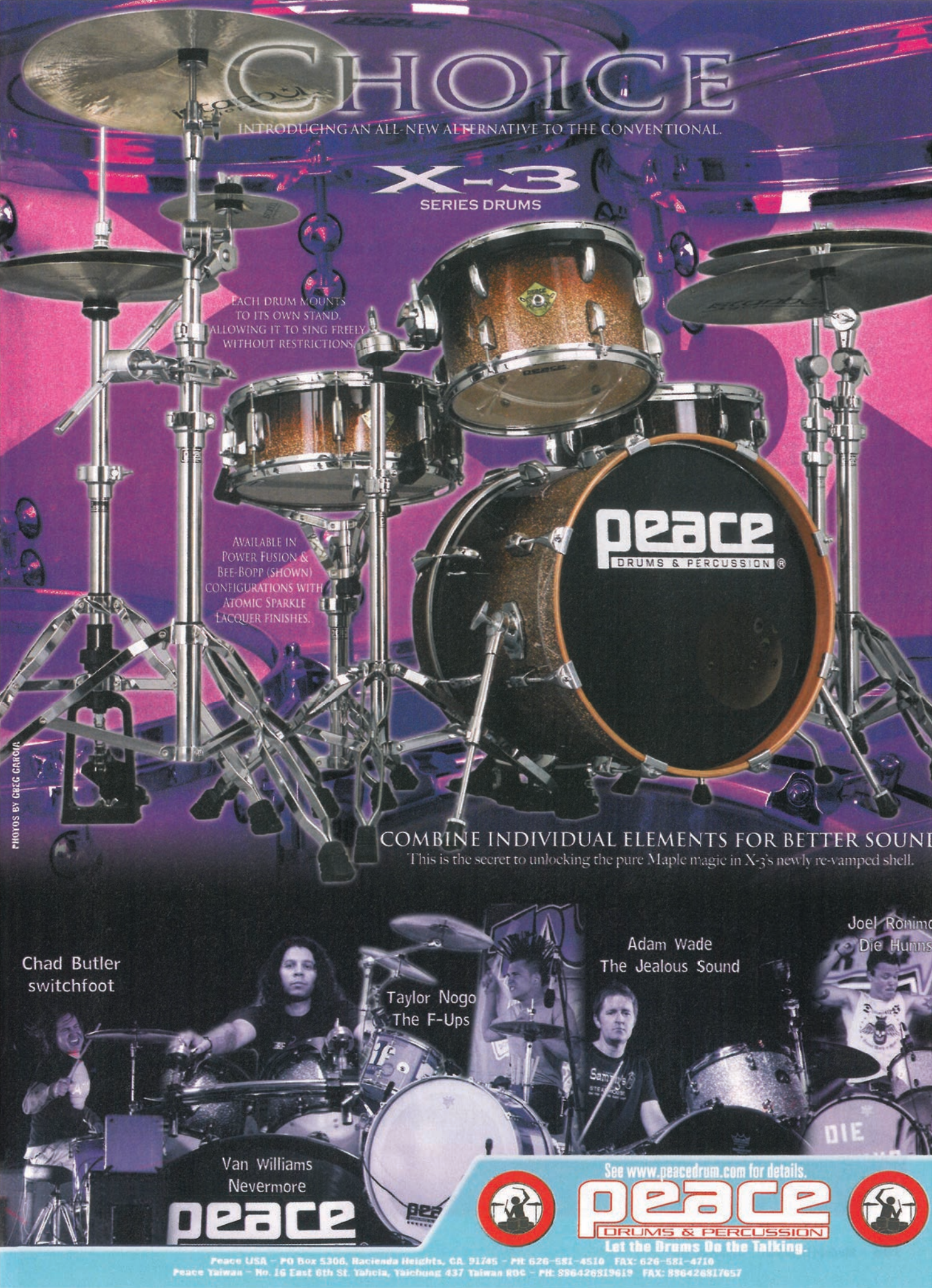
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MD: How particular are you about the mechanics and ergonomics of your setup and performance?

Chris: I'm very particular about it. I sit pretty high. By doing that, I know my center of gravity is right where I want it to be, and I can reach anything on the kit and not have to lunge for it. If I do intentionally want to strike something that way—with a little body language—I can do it and feel comfortable.

As far as body mechanics go, I know that a lot of drummers who play double bass stuff like to sit low for power. But for me, when it comes to playing stuff at high speeds or something that requires a considerable amount of double bass, sitting lower, with your legs back towards you, feels like you're not really driving the pedals into the kick drum. But if you sit a little bit higher, everything's already pointing down...

MD: ...like you're making use of gravity to do the work for you.

Chris: Exactly. Everything's all working in one spot rather than against you. As for my cymbal setup, everything's set pretty close. I like to break up double strokes between instruments, like between the ride and floor tom, similar to what Dennis Chambers does. By keeping the setup close, I'm able to do it faster and much more easily.

MD: What's the key to maintaining your physical flexibility?

Chris: I do a lot of running. I try to run a couple of miles every day. I also do a lot of kick drum exercises, like isolating each leg—just single strokes. Of course, playing with the band is another thing. It's a different story when you've got everybody in there with Marshall amps blasting away. In that setting I've found it to be very important to focus on where I hit the drum so that the sound can cut through. You have to be accurate and consistent with your strokes.

MD: How different are you on stage versus in the studio?

Chris: I wouldn't say I'm completely different, because I still have to hold all of those parts together. The stuff I play on the records I reproduce on stage. But I also want it to be entertaining on stage, because that's what it's about. If you see a band that just stands around on stage and plays perfectly, I think the audience may feel that they could just stay home and listen to the record.

Sometimes I hit a lot harder on stage than in the studio. And I'll admit, sometimes it might be a little more erratic. But I feel it's important to get into what we're doing and present some of the drama and excitement that we feel about this music to the audience. That way, when people come to see us, they feel it was totally worth it.

Eddie Tuduri, Lynn Higa, Vinnie Colaiuta,
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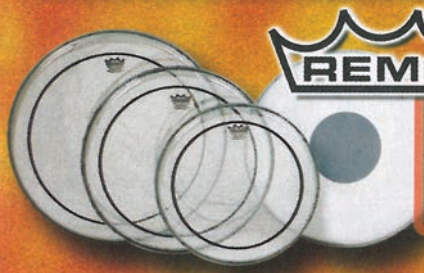

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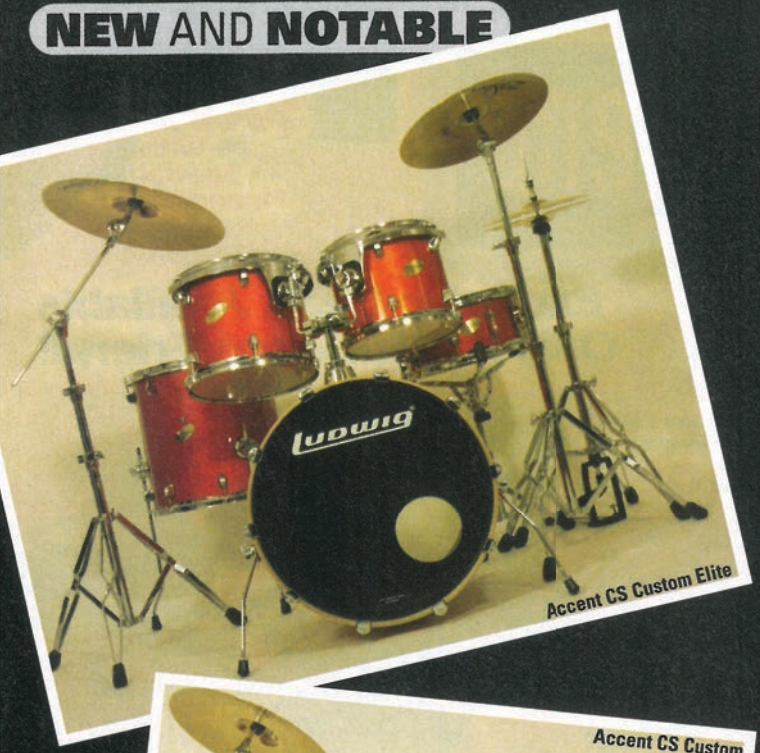


Accent CS Custom Elite

Accent CS Custom

Choice Is Good

Ludwig Expanded Accent CS Series

Ludwig's budget-minded Accent CS Series now includes a variety of outfits said to "skimp on price while offering awesome features and the amazing Ludwig sound."

Accent CS Custom Elite and Accent CS Custom kits offer Power, Fusion, and Jazz models made with 100% birch shells and fitted with Remo heads. Toms feature Vibra-band suspension mounts. New 18"-deep bass drums are said to create a fat low end, while ten-lug snare drums are designed for easy tuning. Hardware includes a chain-drive bass pedal with a Rockplate and easy hoop attachment. Straight and boom cymbal stands, along with hi-hat and snare stands, are standard. Custom Elite drums feature high-gloss finishes in black, blue, wine red, and amber. Custom finishes include satin oil finishes in black, blue, wine red, and natural.

Accent CS outfits feature Vibra-bands, Remo heads, and the same hardware found on CS Custom Elite kits. Shells are crafted with select veneer woods. Kits are available in Power, Fusion, Jazz, and Junior configurations in black, blue, wine red, and silver PVC-wrapped finishes. Cymbal, hi-hat, and snare stands are standard.

Accent CS Combo outfits are designed for the serious beginning drummer, or for drummers on a tight budget. They feature select veneer shells and are available in Power and Jazz setups, with cymbal, hi-hat, and snare stands standard. Black, blue, wine red, and silver PVC-wrapped finishes are offered.

Add-on drum components, hardware, and Planet Z cymbals are available with all Accent CS series outfits.

(574) 522-1675, www.ludwig-drums.com.

A Drum For All Seasons

Toca Player's Series Drums And Jingle-Hit Tambourine Drum

According to Toca, their Player's series fiberglass congas and bongos are built with three considerations in mind: superior tone, durability, and affordability. Finished in gloss black, the 10" and 11" fiberglass drums are fitted with EasyPlay hoops to enhance tuning stability while remaining easy on the hands. Five lugs per conga are secured with Toca's exclusive four-bolt side plates. Further tuning stability is achieved through the use of fully tucked synthetic heads said to provide the slap and "doom" tones of skin heads "while laughing in the face of adverse weather."

The congas come with a heavy-duty adjustable stand, at a list price of $379. Bongos are 7" and 8" in diameter, and also feature EasyPlay hoops. They list for $139.

Toca's new Jingle-Hit Tambourine Drum is a 6"-diameter add-on instrument for percussionists and drumset players. Its 6-ply wood shell is designed to take a beating from drumsticks, while its soft rubber rim is said to be gentle on the fingers for hand playing. It's equipped with a double row of nickel-plated jingles that afford a direct, cutting sound. Wrapped in a white pearl covering, and mounted via the Gibraltar Dual Post Bracket, the Jingle-Hit easily fits into complex setups. List price is $39.

(973) 478-6903, www.tocapercussion.com.

Just Put That Anywhere...

Sabian Splash & Stacker Packs

New Splash & Stacker Packs allow drummers to double up their cymbals on a single stand, thereby producing a tighter setup with an expanded choice of sounds and new playing possibilities. According to Sabian, "It's a combination that lets you get creative without a big cost."

Two packs are available: a 10" XS20 splash with a 4"x4" hinged Stacker (XS1005NSP), and a 10" B8 splash with a 6" straight Stacker (41005SP).

(506) 272-2019, www.sabian.com.

Hitting The Big Four-O

Latin Percussion 40th Anniversary Drums And Matador Bongos

LP's 40th Anniversary congas and bongos reflect the company's four decades of commitment, innovation, and passion. The 30"-high wooden congas are available in 11" quinto, 11¾"conga, and 12½" tumbadora models. They're made using premium shell materials, Pro Care integrated shell protectors, reinforced LP side plates, and Gold Tone Comfort Curve II rims to enhance resonance and lessen player fatigue. Each conga also comes with a gold-toned LP Mic' Lug, an accessory that makes miking easy. The matching bongos have 7¼"- and 8⅝"-diameter heads and are fitted with Gold Tone Comfort Curve Rims and hardware.

The drums are finished in a blonde/red/ebony fade finish, with a special LP 40th Anniversary logo sealed into the lacquer finish. Hand-selected rawhide heads are also imprinted with the logo. Each drum carries a serial number and comes with a certificate of authenticity. The congas can be heard in MP3 at **www.lpmusic.com/streaming/lp-40-conga.mp3.**

Also new from LP are Matador Custom bongos, in four finishes that match their counterpart congas. A new ribbed shell design provides a distinctive look while enhancing shell strength; steel bottoms add stability. The kiln-dried Siam oak shells are topped with hand-selected 7¼" and 8⅝" rawhide heads. This combination is said to project a range of crisp highs and lower mid frequencies.

(973) 478-6903, www.lpmusic.com.

Rare Creatures

Mapex Black Panther Vavona Burlwood And Hammered Bronzed Snare Drums

Only 200 of Mapex's new Black Panther Vavona Burlwood snare drums will be crafted. And only fifty will be allocated to US dealers, making this one of the rarest drums in the world.

Vavona Burlwood is taken from the root area of the majestic California redwood tree. Because these trees are environmentally protected, the wood is only removed when a tree dies from natural causes. The diseases that kill the trees are what create the exotically figured Burlwood, which is said to have incredible strength and remarkable sonic qualities. The Vavona Burlwood snare drums features black chrome hardware on shells finished in an oyster green–tinted high-gloss lacquer.

Also new from Mapex is the Black Panther Hand-Hammered Bronzed snare. Its shell is hand-shaped from the highest-grade brass. Hand hammering creates a multi-faceted surface said to replicate the resonant properties of hard wood, while maintaining the crisp sonic properties of brass. Then the shell undergoes a black-chrome plating process, followed by a unique bronze polishing. Each shell is hand-brushed by skilled artisans, producing an antiqued patina finish. All of this is claimed to give the Black Panther Hand-Hammered Bronzed snares an uncommonly full-bodied sonic range.

The new 5½x14 Black Panther snares are equipped with Remo Ambassador drumheads, die-cast hoops, and low-mass lugs. They come with a durable padded carrying case.

(615) 793-2050, www.mapexdrums.com.

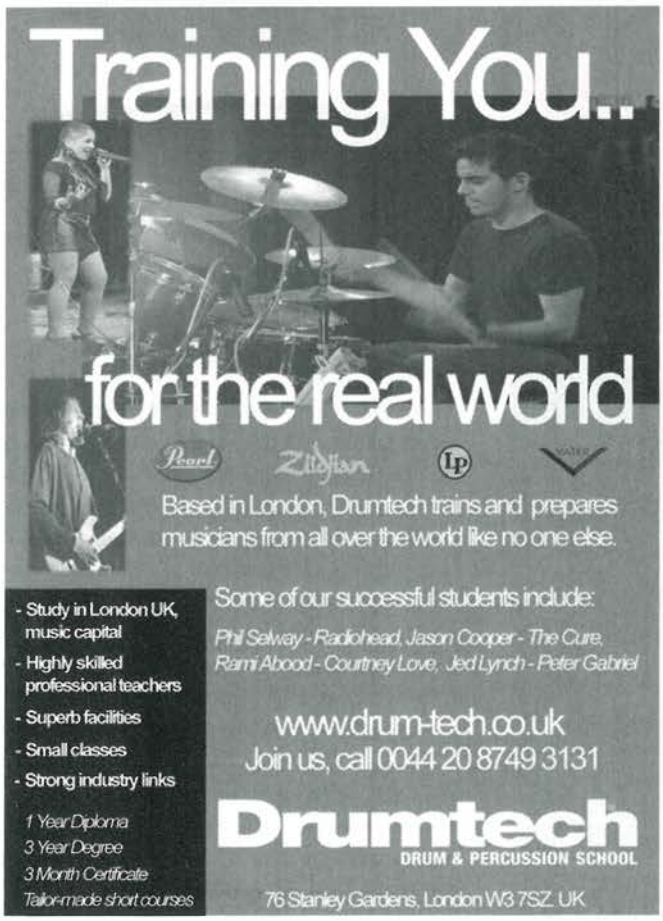
On The Rise And On A Roll

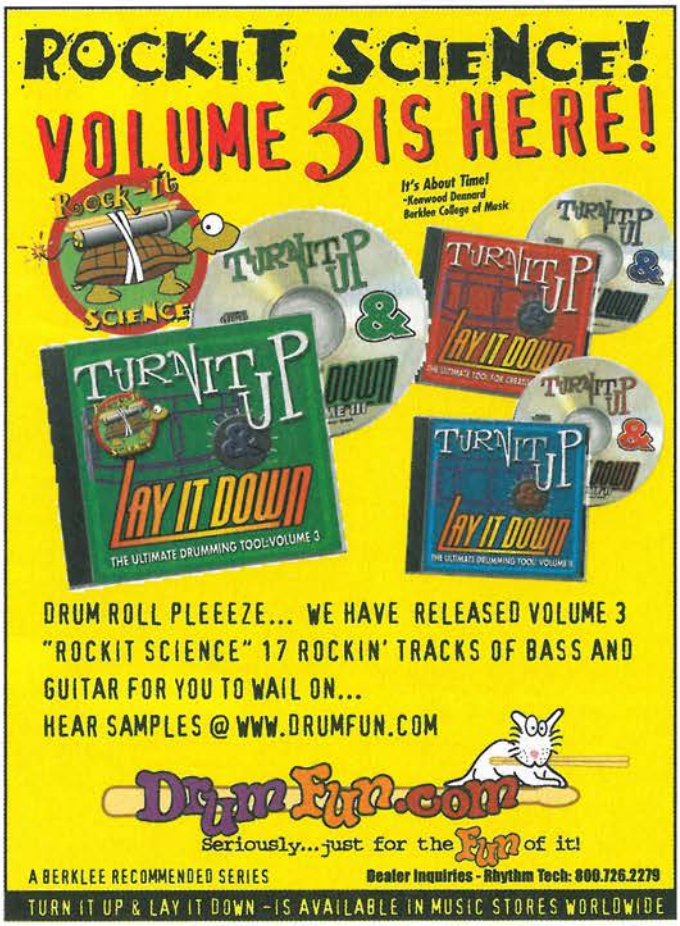
RollingRisers

RollingRisers are portable, mobile drum risers for amateur and professional drummers. They're constructed using durable ¾" birch plywood, heavy-duty hinges, and industrial wheels. All standard platforms are 5' deep and 6' wide, and they fold in half for portability. Assembly takes less than five minutes, with no tools required. Included with each RollingRiser are sixteen equipment-retaining cups designed to keep drums and stands from moving. You mount the cups where you want them for your own personal setup.

The 03 Model RollingRiser ($589) is 6" high. The 04 Model ($879) is 15" high. Its pedestal breaks down to a compact 5'x12"x10". The 05 Model ($1,299) is 28" high. Its pedestal breaks down to 5'x 24"x10". Custom-painted and wood-grain finishes are available.

(888) RISER 98, www.rollingriser.com.





Look Ma, No Hands

Tama Cobra Hands-Free Clutch

Tama's new Cobra Clutch allows double pedal and double bass drummers to use their feet instead of their hands to put hi-hats into the closed position. The clutch also allows drummers to adjust the setting of the closed position that the hi-hats lock into, which cannot be done with a drop clutch.

The Cobra Clutch works in tandem with the hi-hat stand to lock down or release the footboard in a fashion similar to the way the drummer's foot does. The clutch has been designed to work with most standard hi-hat stand designs. It comes with a hardshell form-fitted carrying case, and has a list price of $165.99.

(215) 638-8670, www.tama.com.

Eight Is Enough

Samson Technologies 8KIT Drum Mic' Package

Samson's new 8KIT drum-mic' package starts with two C01 condenser mic's, which feature large (19 mm) diaphragms and smooth flat frequency response for accurate overhead imaging. Three Q-Tom mic's with integrated rim-mount clips handle tom miking, while one Q-Snare (with clip) captures the crack of the snare drum. The Q-Kick, with its large dynamic element, reproduces the low-end attack of the bass drum, while a new C02H mini pencil condenser handles close hi-hat miking.

All of the mic's in the 8KIT feature cardioid patterns voiced specifically for the drums they are capturing, as well as gold-plated XLR connections to ensure a low-noise signal path. The complete eight-piece kit comes packaged in a rugged road case for easy travel and secure storage.

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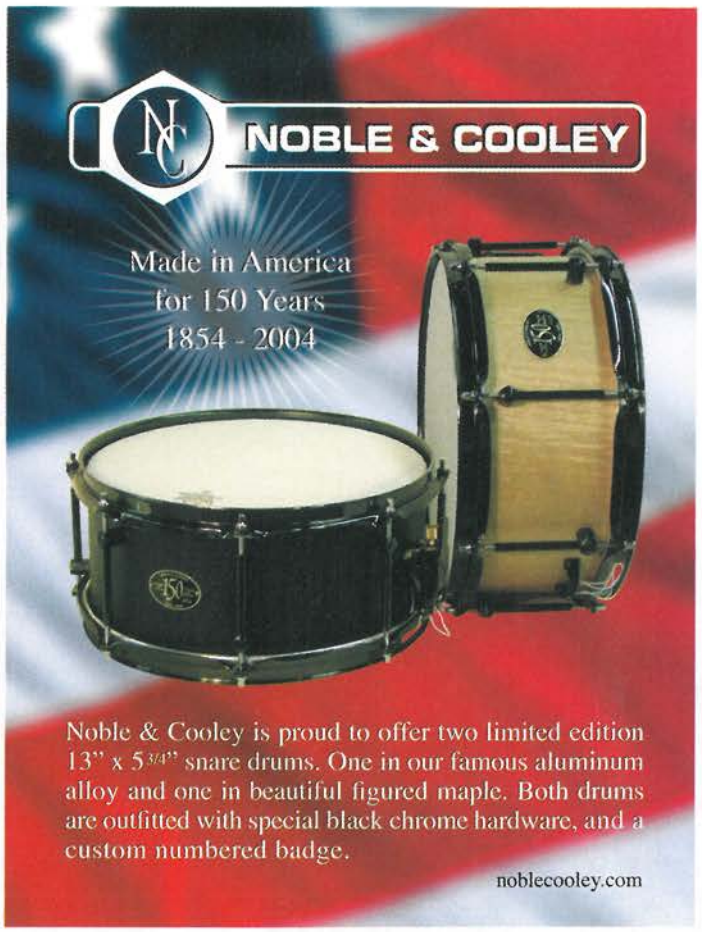


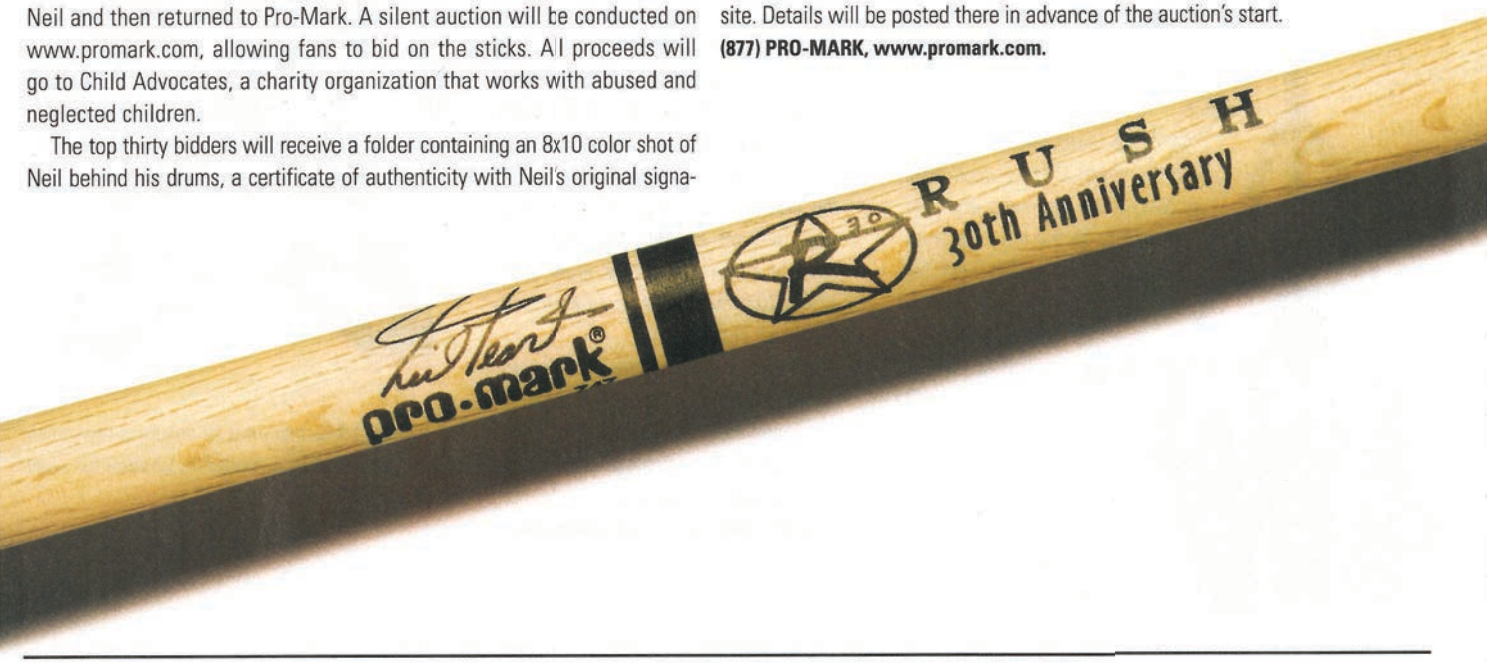
Wow...What A Rush!

Pro-Mark Neil Peart Anniversary Sticks And Auction

Pro-Mark and Rush drummer Neil Peart are celebrating the band's thirtieth anniversary by creating a special imprint that will appear on Peart's Autograph Series Oak 747 sticks throughout the rest of 2004 and into 2005. In addition, thirty pairs of "extra-special" sticks will be played by Neil and then returned to Pro-Mark. A silent auction will be conducted on www.promark.com, allowing fans to bid on the sticks. All proceeds will go to Child Advocates, a charity organization that works with abused and neglected children.

The top thirty bidders will receive a folder containing an 8x10 color shot of Neil behind his drums, a certificate of authenticity with Neil's original signature, and a pair of the special sticks in a black velvet bag embroidered with the band's thirtieth-anniversary logo. The person with the highest bid will also receive some additional "surprises" that will be announced when the silent auction begins. Anyone interested in bidding should watch Pro-Mark's Web site. Details will be posted there in advance of the auction's start.

(877) PRO-MARK, www.promark.com.



Discover Your Inner D

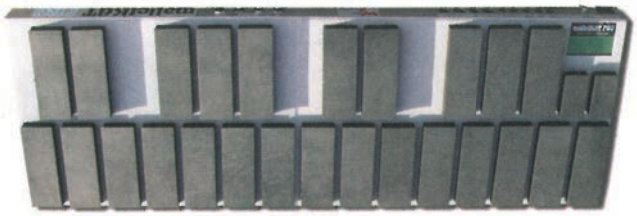
Kat Or Kitten?

Alternate Mode malletKAT Express And Other Upgrades

Alternate Mode's malletKAT Express features the same power and control of the malletKAT, but is now offered in a two-octave version (expandable up to four octaves). With its aluminum case, the Express weighs only 7 lbs.—one-third the weight of the original malletKAT. It also features a softer, thicker neoprene playing surface, making performance quieter and more natural feeling. A travel case, a stand, and controller pedals are optional.

Also from Alternate Mode is a new software chip 5.0 for the malletKAT and the malletKAT WS MIDI Percussion Controller. The software contains new sequences for its rhythm generator, alternating note shifts per pad, velocity note shifts per pad, preset controller value setups per kit, and more. Finally, training videos are now available for the malletKAT, drumKAT, dk10, and trapKAT MIDI Controllers, at $6.99 each.

(413) 594-5190, www.alternatemode.com.



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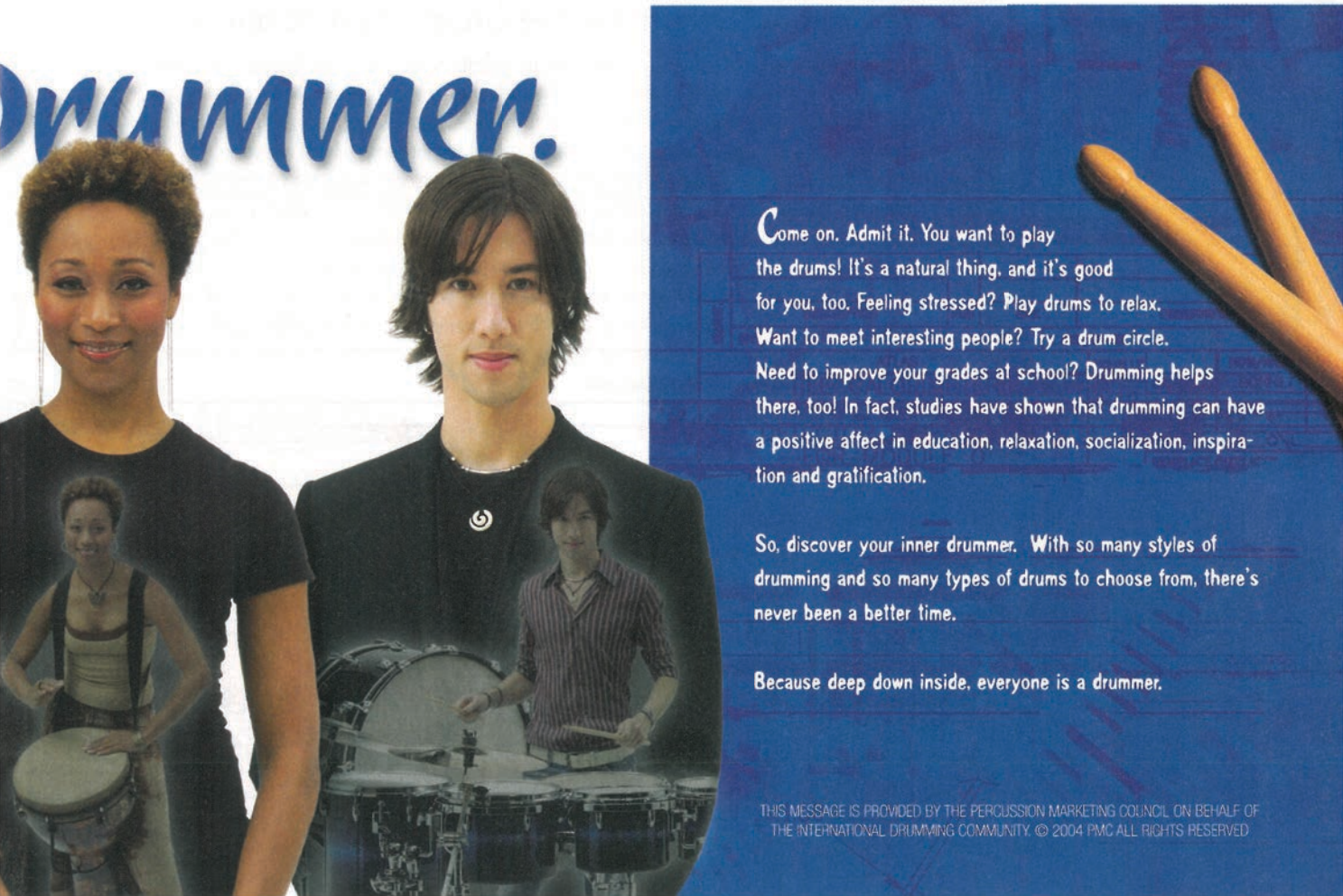
The PRO 25ax hypercardioid dynamic mic' is specifically designed for high-SPL applications such as kick drum and percussion. It delivers a warm low-frequency response with excellent presence. The PRO 35ax cardioid condenser clip-on mic' is tailored for toms and percussion, with a UniMount clip that permits accurate positioning while protecting the element. The lightweight PRO 8HEx hypercardioid dynamic headworn mic' is especially suited for drummers. Its low-visibility headband and cushioned support pads provide a stable, comfortable fit.

(330) 686-2600, www.audio-technica.com.



Drumset Players Don't Get All The Goodies

Meinl Candela Percussion Cymbals And Percussion Holders

Meinl's Candela percussion cymbals are designed to produce soft and exotic tones, and to respond well even at low volumes. The 10" Percussion Splash is thin and quick for percussive accents. The 14" and 16" Percussion Crashes are tonally matched, with distinctive attack and a quick decay. The 18" Timbale Crash/Ride has a loud, penetrating bell and a full, warm sound when played as a crash.

Meinl has also introduced two new clamp-on percussion holders. The Shaker Holder (designed by Meinl artist Jen Lowe) firmly attaches to any common rod and holds any shaker in a comfortable position for quick access. The Tambourine Holder converts any hand-held tambourine to a mounted version, able to resist the hardest hits.

(615) 227-5090, www.meinl.de.

18" Timbale Crash/Ride

16" Percussion Crash

10" Percussion Splash

Meinl Tamborine holder

Shaker Holder

Head For The Hills!

Mountain Rythym Frame Drums And Bodhran

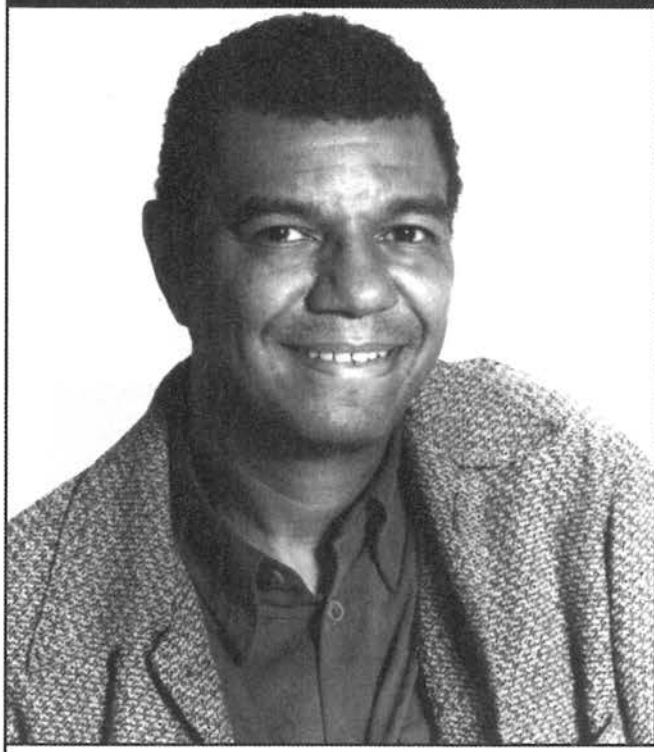
Mountain Rythym's frame drums and bodhran are now made with solid, lightweight oak shells, and are equipped with a simple yet effective internal tuning system. The convenience of this system facilitates quickly reducing the tension of the head between playing periods, thus extending the life of the head. Drumheads are hand-selected to provide the best feel and response.

The shell depths for the new drums have been chosen to provide the best sound, broadest tuning range, and easiest handling possible. Frame drums are often difficult to handle due to weight and balance issues, but these drums were designed to facilitate easy holding. A cutout on the frame drum allows for easy two-hand, multiple-finger Middle Eastern playing techniques. On the bodhran, crossbars have been eliminated, allowing the "holding" hand to execute pitch variations common in contemporary playing styles. The 14" frame drum lists for $299, the 18" frame drum lists for $319, and the 18" bodhran lists for $329.

(905) 764-6543, www.mountainrythym.com.

Mountain Rythym Frame Drums feature a new internal tuning system.

AQUARIAN



Jack De Johnette

I worked very closely with **AQUARIAN** to develop my Signature drumhead. I wanted a good attack, full tone and moderate sustain.

I also wanted a special surface that would give me a fuller brush sound and a good attack with the sticks.

Last but not least, I wanted a "natural" sound that did not need any additional muffling, even when recording.

After much work, my dreams were realized. The drumhead I had always wanted was now a reality.

Good news! The **NEW Jack De Johnette** heads are even better than the original.

Give my heads the **"TAP TEST™"**. They sound good even before you put them on your drums.

REMEMBER

"If the head doesn't sound good when you tap it, it won't sound good when you play it!"

Jack DeJohnette
Drum Legend

"TAP TEST"

Hold the drumhead by the hoop and tap it in the center with your finger, or better yet, a drumstick. It should have a musical tone and resonance.

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And What's More

Customers purchasing a **MAPEX** Janus Ergo pedal or a Janus Transmission system will receive a free **REMO** Kickpack (containing a PowerStroke 3 bass drum head plus single and double Impact Patches). Drummers can choose between 20" ($69.50 value), 22" ($73 value), and 24" ($77 value) Kickpacks at no additional cost. The promotion runs through December 31, 2004.

Mapex has also announced that their most popular M and Pro M series drumkits—previously manufactured with maple and basswood shells—will now be produced entirely from maple. These hand-lacquered, all-maple kits will carry retail prices between $1,295 and $1,999.

(615) 793-2050, www.mapexdrums.com.

John Blackwell's Player's Design stick model from **VATER** has been re-launched with a new name. Originally named The John Blackwell Matrix, the model has been renamed John Blackwell's Jia Angel in remembrance of John's late daughter, Jia Kennie Blackwell. The design remains the same: 16⅛" long and .570" in diameter, with a small barrel tip for extreme cymbal clarity.

(781) 767-1877, www.vater.com.

After building 6x13 BQE series beech snare drums for ten years, **CAKE DRUMS** now offers 6½x14 PeaceMaker maple models. The 10-ply drums (with reinforcement hoops) are designed to cover a lower sound spectrum than the higher-pitched BQE drums, and to be versatile workhorses for studio drummers who don't want to bring an array of snare drums to sessions. List price is $399.99.

(800) 579-4832, www.cakedrums.com.

SMARTRIGGER makes electronic cymbals said to offer authentic cymbal playability, feel, swing, and responsiveness, along with superior triggering. The devices are made from real metal cymbals laminated to a special clear acoustic dampening layer to produce an electronic cymbal trigger that looks and feels like a real acoustic cymbal without the acoustic cymbal sound. Smartrigger cymbals are available in 13" dual-zone crash, 16" dual-zone ride, 10" single-zone splash, and 14" single-zone China models. A hi-hat will be released shortly.

Www.smartrigger.com.

KORG's MM-2 MetroGnome is a practice aid for high-volume situations. It features a full-size wraparound piece that gently hooks over the ear, as well as a compact body with a padded speaker that rests against the earlobe. Because of its proximity to the ear, it eliminates straining to hear a "traditional" metronome, as well as the need for headphones, whose additional cables interfere with freedom of movement. The battery-powered unit has 39 selectable tempo steps from 40 to 208 BPM, selectable time signatures from 1/4 through 7/4, plus 8th notes, triplets, and 16th notes. List price is $35.

(631) 390-6500, www.korg.com.

PRO-MARK has added a new tenor drum stick model to its line of marching products. Designed by respected educator Mike Stevens, the American hickory model TS7 is 16" (406 mm) long and .710" (18 mm) in diameter. Its small molded nylon "cookie" head features a unique design that eliminates the need for a screw to hold it in place.

The TS7 is said to produce an extremely articulate sound and a fast, controllable rebound for passages that require additional speed. List price is $15.95 per pair.

(877) PRO-MARK, www.promark.com.

www.moderndrummer.com

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Summer NAMM 2004

Report and photos by Rick Mattingly

After a twelve-year run, the Summer NAMM (National Association of Music Merchandisers) show was held for the final time in Nashville. The growth of the show has prompted a move to Indianapolis for 2005.

Stick Stuff is a liquid rubber that comes in a bottle so you can dip sticks and mallets to create a grip area. The more you dip, the thicker the grip. The product is available in nine colors, from **BeiiMEiiUp**.
(708) 482-7531,
www.drumstickstuff.com.

The New Orleans series and the Pang Thang were introduced by **Bosphorus**.
(770) 205-0552,
www.bosphoruscymbals.com.

Brush-Stik offers a 2B drumstick fitted with a retractable wire brush for quick changes.
(281) 437-0815, owens18096@aol.com.

Cadeson debuted their entry-level DA-Fusion kit, with shells made of basswood.
(213) 999-4010, www.cadeson.com.

Color-coded practice pads and colorful stick-ons for hand drum positions were shown by **Educational Music Accessories**. They're designed for the elementary market.
(949) 481-5873,
www.educationalmusicaccessories.com.

A four-piece E-Pad set designed for drumkit practice was shown by **The E Company**.
(818) 788-4335, www.epadco.com.

A **Fibes** drumkit in Pink Crystallite finish attracted a lot of attention. The company also introduced a Purple Crystallite finish, a 6½x14 solid-shell snare drum, and a fiberglass shell with a raw fiberglass finish.
(512) 416-9955, www.fibes.com.

FirstAct displayed an affordable digital drumset that features 126 voices, 30 drumkits, and touch-sensitive drum pads and cymbal pads.
(781) 453-2221, www.firstact.com.

GPR Rotation Molded drum cases from **Gator Cases** have previously been available only in five-piece Standard and Fusion sets. They are now available individually.
(813) 221-4191, www.GatorCases.com.

Gretsch displayed the new Blackhawk ES (Ebony Swirl) series, and also introduced the Nighthawk entry-level kit.
(860) 509-8888,
www.kamanmusic.com.

New books from **Hal Leonard** include Dave Matthews and Red Hot Chili Peppers transcriptions, and *The Beat Of A Different Drummer* by Dominick Cuccia. New DVDs include conga instruction by Roberto Quintero, *Thomas Lang: Creative Control*, and Billy Ward: *Big Time*.
(414) 774-3630, www.halleonard.com.

Enduro Pro cases by **Humes & Berg** feature an interlocking design, powder-coated handles, extra wide and thick nylon straps, and a new Pro Lining.
(219) 397-1980, www.humes-berg.com.

New **Istanbul Agop** models include the Trash-Hit in 21" and 22" sizes, as well as Signature Flatrides in 18" through 22" diameters, and Sultan Flatrides in 18" through 21" sizes.
(213) 624-4264,
www.istanbulcymbals.com.

The Broadway Standard 8x14 snare drum in red sparkle has recently been added to the **Leedy** line.
(912) 748-7070, www.gretsch.com.

New drum books from **Mel Bay** include *Earth Rhythms Catalog* and *Tomas Cruz Conga Method*.
(636) 257-3970, www.melbay.com.

The **Orion** cymbal company of Brazil offers several series, including the new unhammered Viziuss series and the B8 hand-hammered Revolution Pro series.
(305) 667-1441,
www.orioncymbals.com.

Peace's display highlighted their all-maple Paragon kit.
(626) 581-4510,
www.peacemusic.com.tw.

New from **Pearl Drums** is the limited-edition MHR Masters Mahogany kit. It features a vintage white marine pearl finish, 100% African Mahogany shells with maple reinforcement rings, and vintage-style rounded bearing edges. Pearl also displayed a new Alien Hieroglyphics finish in their Masterworks series.

In **Pearl**'s percussion line, a new Black Tribal Steel finish is now available on Elite congas and bongos.
(615) 833-4477, www.pearldrum.com.

Even though the Nashville show got larger over the years, it still retained a relaxed attitude. Companies generally had smaller displays, with fewer new-product introductions than were seen at the winter show in Anaheim. In fact, many of the items on display at this summer's show had already been announced in recent *MD* issues, and so are not included here. Still, there was plenty of new stuff to ogle. Let's take a look at some of the goodies.

A new company called **Percussionstands.com.** debuted a line of all-wood stands for congas in Universal, Sit-Down, and Stand-Up models.
(800) 516-0168, www.percussionstands.com.

Pintech's new TE-20 kit is designed to work with the Roland TD20 module. Toms and the snare have dual triggers, and the kit features a Visu-Lite hi-hat.
(864) 242-2150, www.edrums.com.

Remo displayed a TSS marching quint set that also features an accent snare drum.
(661) 294-5600, www.remo.com.

Rhythm Tech has released *Turn It Up & Lay It Down Vol. 3*, a practice CD that features play-along grooves performed by a guitarist and a bassist.
(914) 636-6900, www.rhythmtech.com.

New at the summer show was a case specially designed for **Roc-N-Soc**'s distinctive thrones.
(828) 452-1736, www.rocnsoc.com.

Ross Mallet Instruments introduced the "Vibeman" promotion to entice drummers to learn vibes.
(800) 283-4676, www.rossmallets.com.

Sabian is conducting a promotion through which customers who purchase a complete XS20 cymbal set can receive a free Samsung MP3 player. Those who purchase a complete B8 cymbal set can receive a free Savage snare drum.
(506) 272-2019, www.sabian.com.

Slingerland is continuing their comeback efforts with kits like this Gene Krupa model, which features a Radio King snare.
(615) 871-4500, www.gibson.com.

Spaun displayed several Hybrid snare drums with shells made of a combination of acrylic and different types of wood.
(909) 971-7761, www.spaundrums.com.

Stagg introduced thin, warm Vintage Bronze cymbals and dry Black Metal cymbals in a full range of sizes.
(615) 793-8787, www.emdmusic.com.

Tama featured the Starclassic Maple efx limited-edition drumkit with a Silver Silk finish. Also new was a 5½x14 Birdseye Maple snare drum with maple hoops, a 6½x10 Black Nickel-Plated Steel snare drum, a 5½x14 Birdseye Maple snare drum with cherrywood hoops, and a 5½x14 Starclassic Antique Copper-Plated Shell snare drum.
(215) 638-8670, www.tama.com.

This thirteen-piece Ultimate Monster Kit from **Taye** adds an extra floor tom, three shallow toms, two Popcorn snares, and two timbales to a standard five-piece drumkit in the Studio Maple series.
(909) 628-9589, www.taye.com.

Toca's new Synergy Pro African djembe has a wood shell, a goatskin head, and rope tuning, and is made with no metal parts.
(860) 509-8888, www.kamanmusic.com.

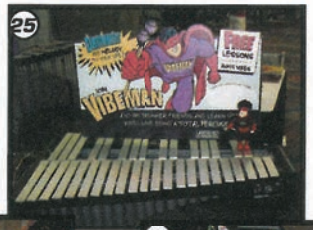
The new Triangle Tree from **TreeWorks** includes 3", 4", 5", and 6" triangles that are also graduated in diameter. They're made from high-carbon steel, have a black finish, and come with a stainless-steel beater and walnut mantle.
(615) 780-2641, www.treeworkschimes.com.

UniGrip's Lounge Lizard has rods on one end and a plain butt end, and is made of bamboo. The L-Groover is a bamboo brush with a special grip. UniGrip also now sells slip-on grips.
(800) 474-7068, www.unigrip2000.com.

The new Vintage Bomber bass drum beater from **Vater** is made of synthetic lamb's wool over a cork core. It's designed to replicate the sound of beaters from the 1920s and '30s.
(781) 767-1877, www.vater.com.

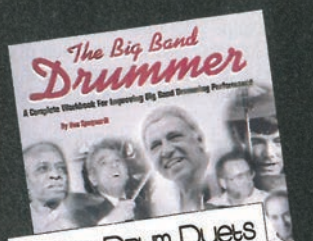
New items from **Vic Firth** include Tim Genis timpani mallets, two Airto Street Beat surdo mallets, Arthur Hull and Matt Cameron sticks, and a line of Heavy Hitter practice pads that includes models for snare and multi-toms.
(781) 326-3455, www.vicfirth.com.

New books from **Alfred Publishing** include *Quick Start Rock Drums* and *Beginning Drumset*, both by Pete Sweeney, *Get Locked* for drums and bass (to develop the rhythm section), and the Max X combo book/DVD series, which has versions for all instruments.
(818) 891-5999, www.alfredpub.com.



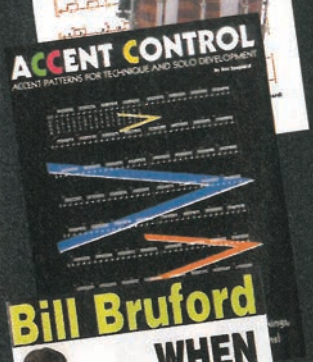
Serious Books for Serious Drummers...

THE MODERN DRUMMER LIBRARY

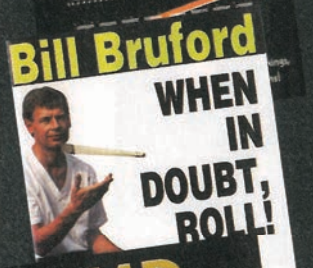


The Big Band Drummer
by Ron Spagnardi
A complete workbook for improving big band drumming performance.

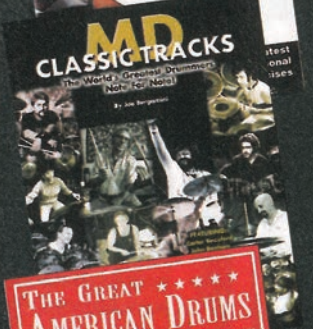
Snare Drum Duets
by Ron Spagnardi
Twenty-five challenging duets that are fun for students and teachers. Includes a CD for playalong of either part.



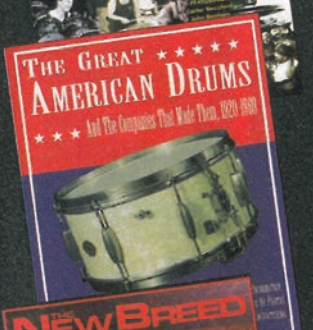
Accent Control
by Ron Spagnardi
Over 1,000 accent exercises using mixed stickings, rolls, flams, and accents around the drums. A must for technique and solo development.



When In Doubt, Roll
by Bill Bruford
Bruford's greatest recorded performances, and exercises to develop facility, flflexibility, and creativity.



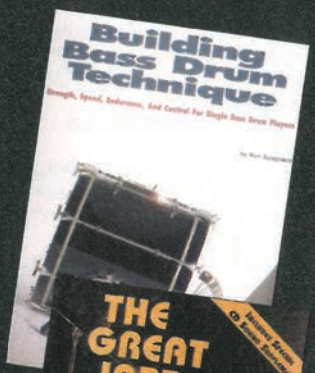
Classic Tracks
by Joe Bergamini
Note for note transcriptions of thirteen of the world's greatest drummers. Bonham, Gadd, Phillips, Peart, Porcaro, and more.



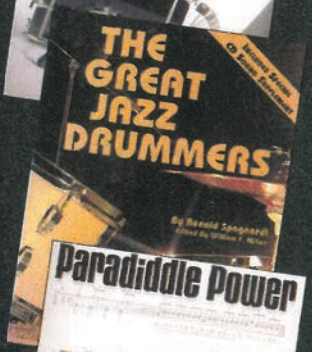
The Great American Drums
by Harry Cangany
The history of American drum manufacturing.

The New Breed
by Gary Chester
Develop the skills needed to master today's studio requirements.

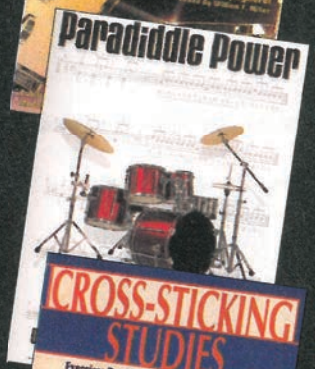
Building Bass Drum Technique
by Ron Spagnardi
Strength, speed, endurance, and control for improved single bass drum performance.



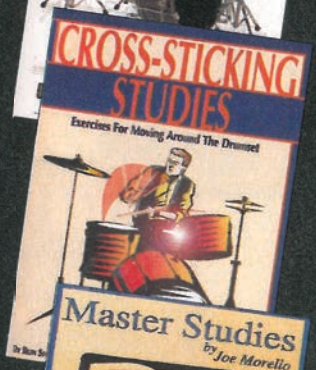
The Great Jazz Drummers
by Ron Spagnardi
60 of the world's legendary jazz drumming greats. CD included.



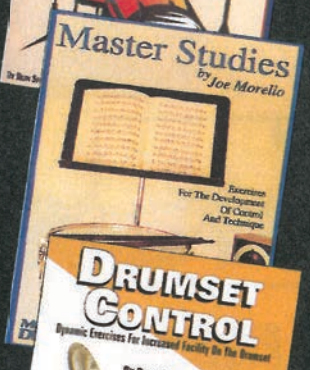
Paradiddle Power
by Ron Spagnardi
Developing your technique on the drumset with paradiddle combinations.



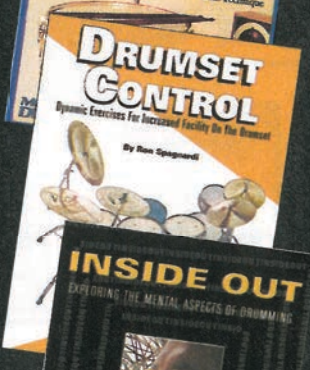
Cross-Sticking Studies
by Ron Spagnardi
Dynamic cross-sticking patterns to improve drumset facility.



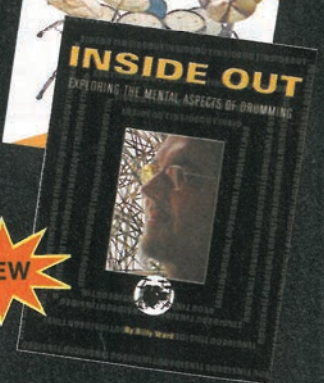
Master Studies
by Joe Morello
The book on hand development and drumstick control.



Drumset Control
by Ron Spagnardi
A wide selection of dynamic exercises designed to increase facility on the drumset.

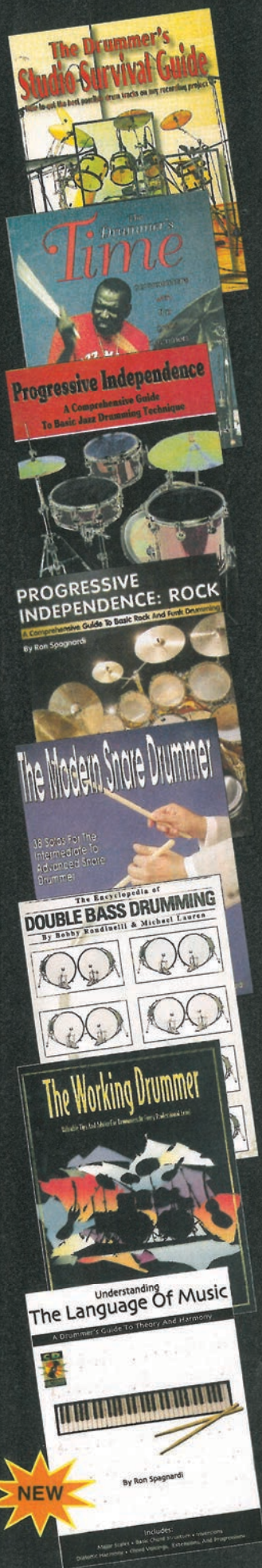


Inside Out
by Billy Ward
Exploring the mental, creative, and artistic aspects of drumming by one of MD's most popular columnists.



NEW

For more information on any of these books check out the "Books" section at www.moderndrummer.com.



The Drummer's Studio Survival Guide
by Mark Parsons
The definitive book on recording drums, for the novice to professional drummer.

The Drummer's Time
by Rick Mattingly
A compilation of enlightening conversations with the great drummers of jazz, from Louie Bellson to Tony Williams.

Progressive Independence
by Ron Spagnardi
A comprehensive guide to coordinated independence for jazz drummers.

Progressive Independence: Rock
by Ron Spagnardi
163 pages of essential rock and funk drumming techniques.

The Modern Snare Drummer
by Ron Spagnardi
38 exciting snare drum solos that challenge reading and technical skills.

Double Bass Drumming
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	Master Studies (06631474)	$12.95	
	The Great American Drums (06620010)	$19.95	
	Drumset Control (06620061)	$12.95	
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	Studio Survival Guide (00330257)	$12.95	
	The Drummer's Time (00330454)	$12.95	
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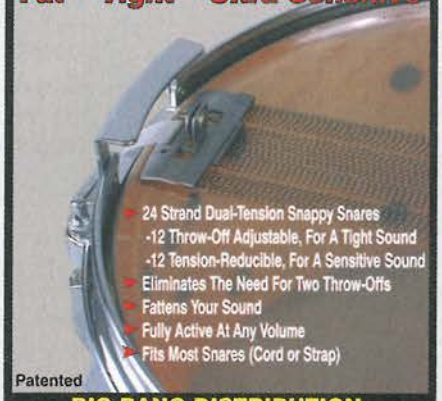

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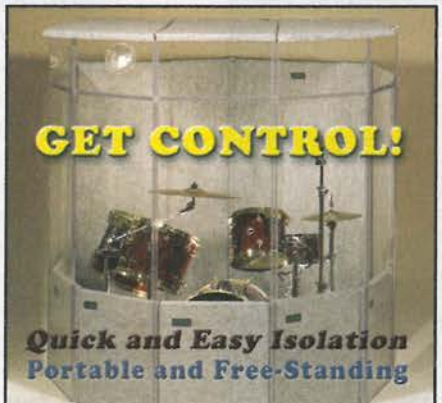

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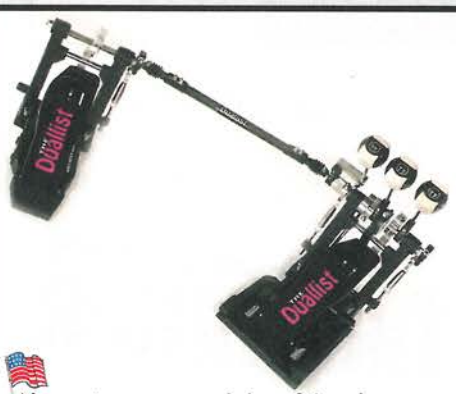

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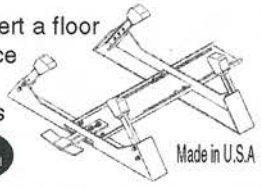

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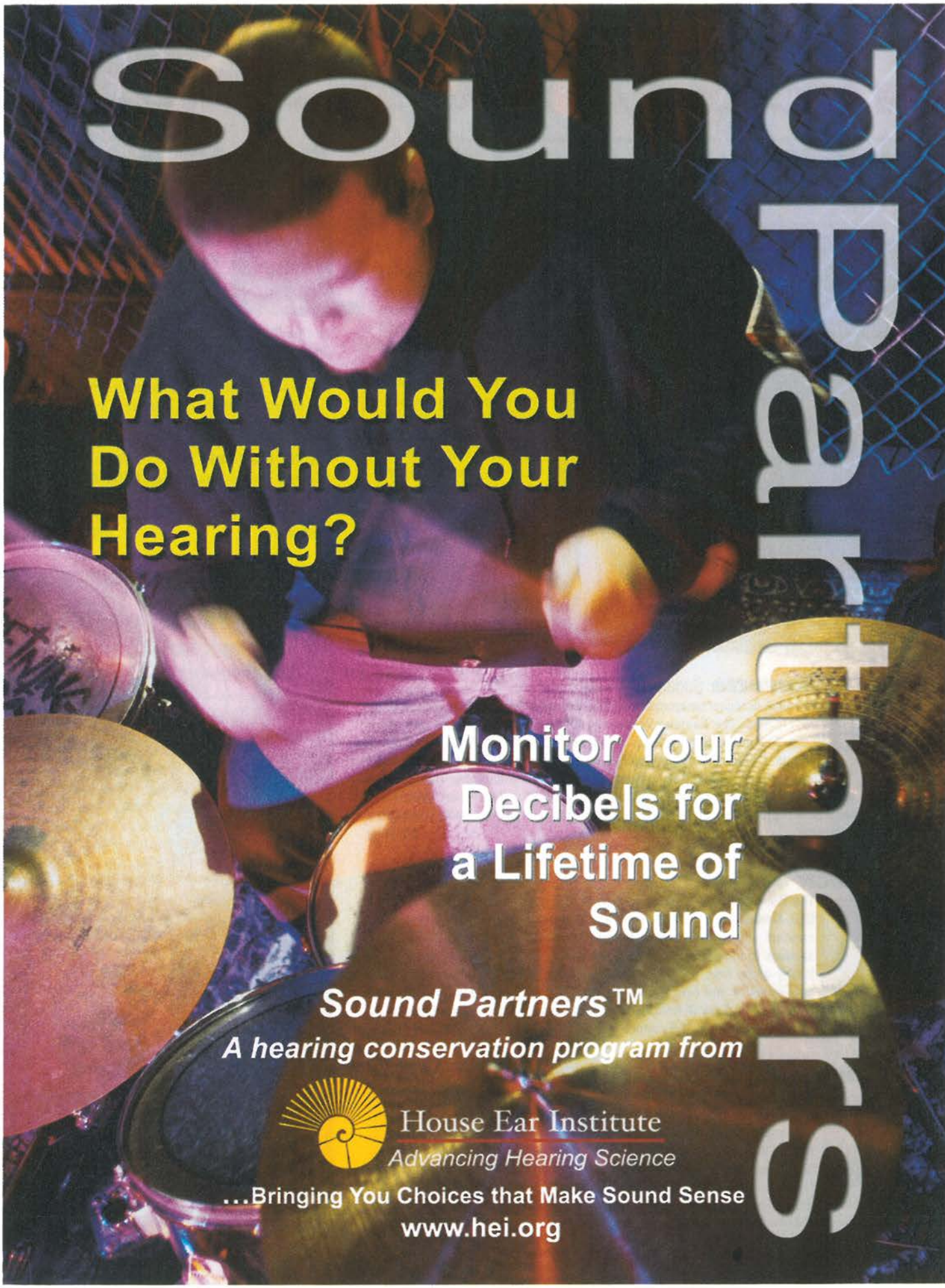
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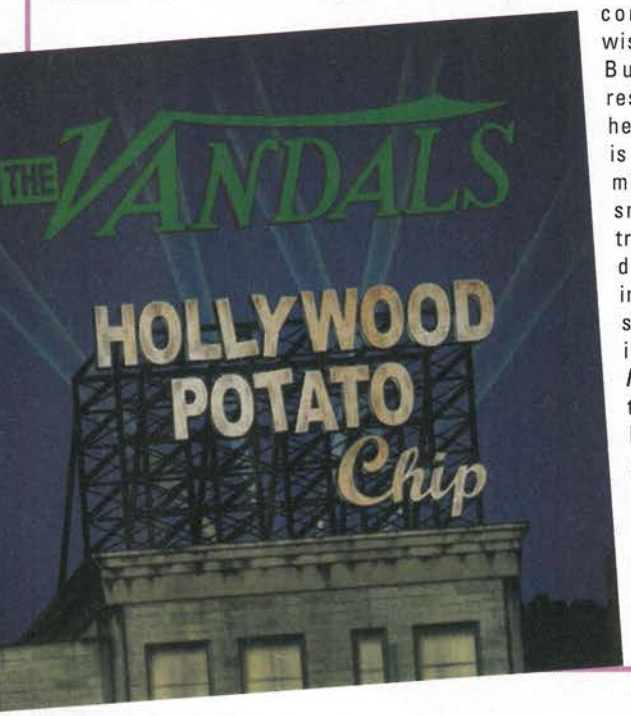
RECORDINGS

rating scale poor classic

The Vandals Hollywood Potato Chip (Kung Fu)

Performing zany, uptempo punk rock can prove disastrous, particularly if the talent is anything like their music suggests. Fortunately, The Vandals have **JOSH FREESE** controlling their otherwise disorderly conduct. But Freese is hardly reserved or conservative here. "Be A Good Robot" is a lesson in punk drumming; Freese's galloping snare rudiments on the track's chorus will keep drum fans deconstructing his phrases ad nauseum. Particularly striking about Freese on *Hollywood Potato Chip* is that he *really* sounds like he's enjoying himself. And when driving The Vandals, that's about the most important feeling to convey. **Waleed Rashidi**



Ramiro Musotto Sudaka (Fast Horse/Ryko)

Brazilian producer/programmer Ramiro Musotto, formerly the percussionist with legends like Caetono Veloso and Gilberto Gil, has brewed up a feast here. Musotto's debut release is a masterful blend of Amazonian Indian chants, Condomble spirit melodies, and random sound samples, all fused into a stream of electronic sequencing and techno-wizardry. This back-to-the-future tour of the sounds and feels of modern-ancient Brazil will transport listeners to Bahia quicker than a 747 jumbo jet. Electronica plus Afro-Brazilian roots combine to provide a mind-map for the ear. **Bill Kiely**

The Book Of Knots (Arclight)

The Book Of Knots features musicians from noteworthy acts Shiner, Pere Ubu, Sleepytime Gorilla Museum, and Skeleton Key. Their debut, a nautical concept album of all things, features drummer **MATTHIAS BOSSI**, who appears to have graduated from the school of Dale Crover. Yet all is not loosey-goose hats, snare flams, and plodding, repetitive patterns, as Bossi gets sensitive and delicate on "Frank's Funeral" and "Back On Dry Land." Much like Crover's Melvins, The Book Of Knots is an acquired taste. Fans of sometimes spacey, occasionally sludgy, but oft-quirky rock, take notice. **Waleed Rashidi**

Machine Head Through The Ashes Of Empires (Roadrunner)

Machine Head achieve an unprecedented level of aggression on their fifth album, which is one of their best. Yet the aggression is offset by melodic sections that rise above the prevailing rage. These contrasting feels are worked into interesting song structures that range from thundering grooves to creative technical lines. There are a lot of details in these songs, which reveal themselves with additional listening. Drummer **DAVE McCLAIN** is crucial to Machine Head, turning in a creative performance that displays his abilities well. Any fan of heavy music should check this album out. **Martin Patmos**

Various Artists Spin The Bottle: An All-Star Tribute To KISS (Koch)

Spin The Bottle is the ultimate tribute to Ace, Gene, Paul, and Peter. Peter Criss might not have set the drumming world on fire with technique, but he played what he needed to, and on this CD, every guest drummer plays and (on the limited-edition bonus DVD) talks about Peter and his bandmates with the utmost respect. Members of Twisted Sister, Whitesnake, Toto, The Melvins, Motörhead, and Ozzy's band, among others, do the honors here, and highlights include **JOHN TEMPESTA** on "Detroit Rock City," **GREGG BISSONETTE** on "I Want You" and "Calling Doctor Love," **CARMINE APPICE** on "God Of Thunder," **AYNSLEY DUNBAR** on "I Stole Your Love," and **VINNIE COLAIUTA** on "Parasite." **Billy Amendola**

Kickin' Out The New by Fran Azzarto

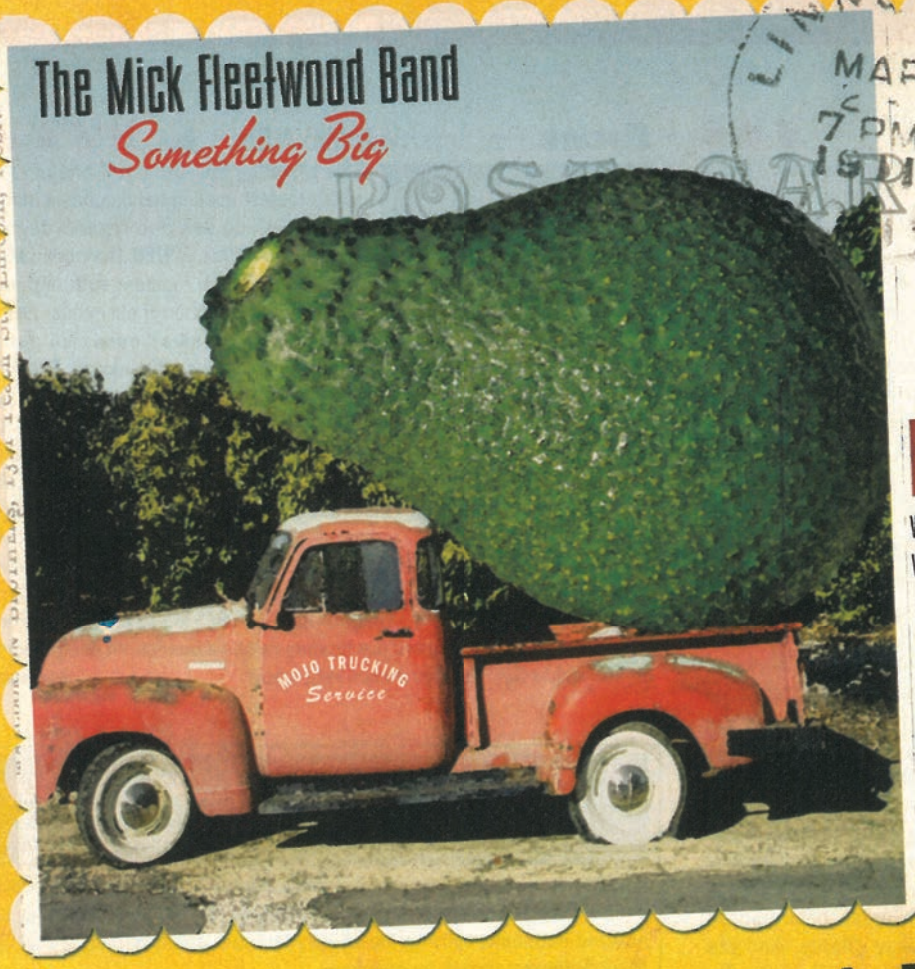
The Vestals, Gomez, The Exit

The Vestals' **MARIO GARZA** plays his kit with the ease of a seasoned professional, even though this is the band's (self-titled) debut record. Each song is a pop/rock gem, which requires Garza to play *into* as well as with the sing-song melodies. Garza's kit sounds big without overpowering the vocals, and his fills are neatly tucked in between each verse and chorus. (Warming House)

OILY PEACOCK's grooves on Gomez' fourth album, *Split The Difference*, range from country backbeats to rock 2 and 4. But his beats usually only last for a verse or so, and then it's onto the toms, crashes, or some random bongo. Peacock is constantly thinking, and he gracefully turns this record into a demonstration of what a drummer can do with a basic kit and some percussive toys. (Virgin)

Playing rock beats is not just about kick and snare—at least if you're The Exit's **GUNNAR PURVEY**. Toms, ride cymbal bells, open hi-hat's—anything and everything goes, all the time. *Home For An Island* has a post-punk vibe, and Purvey makes the most of his drum arsenal. (Some)

Wish You Were Here?



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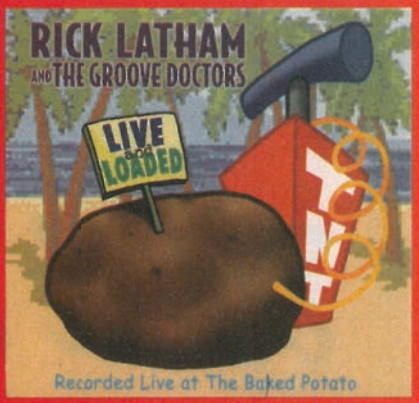
Clinton Administration, Groove Doctors, Particle

The Clinton Administration, a group of jam band all stars (Galactic, Particle, Greyboy), has fun with the songs of Sly & The Family Stone on *Take You Higher*. They go hip-hop on "Hot Fun," and sing the rich melodies of "Everybody Is A Star" and "Family Affair" with old school B-3 and Fender Rhodes keys. "I Want To Take You Higher" and "Thank You" are pulsating events thanks to the ever solid pocket of **STANTON MOORE**. (Magnitude)

RICK LATHAM & The Groove Doctors show their muscle and advanced musicianship on *Live And Loaded*, recorded at the famed Baked Potato club. Latham handles all the grooves with attention and drive, pumping up the solos and providing a rhythmic glue along with percussive bassist **Vail Johnson**. The pair never lose contact, and their duet playing is a highlight. (www.groovedoctorsjazz.com)

Remember the repetitious disco grooves of the '80s? The cheesy synth sounds? The gratuitous guitar solos? On *Launchpad*, Particle combines many of those elements into a jam band-friendly stew, with drummer **DARREN PUJALET** in the hot seat. Pujalet keeps the intensity up throughout the long, driving jams, a formula that works when they're concentrating on the groove. But when they try to out-solo each other, it only sounds pompous. (Or Music)

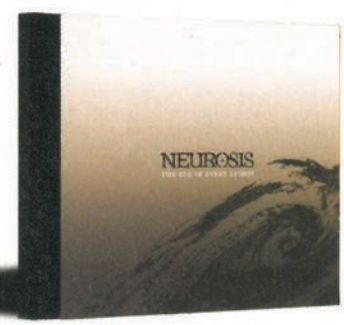


Alice Donut Three Sisters (Howler)

Tomas Antona's satirical slant on life has always defined Alice Donut's music. While the band is not ruled by a singular vision, they certainly channel energy like a roaring solitary river. Drummer **STEPHEN MOSES** churns up an ocean of Bonham-esque power-finesse beats like a funky Poseidon. He virtually propels the band in songs like "Kiss Me" and "Problems." (In fact, they just might be up the creek without him.) Though these Donuts have tasted sweeter in the past, the band, which just recently regrouped after a seven-year hiatus, doesn't sugarcoat anything—they offer equal helpings of the sacred, profane, and supercilious. (www.alicedonut.com)

Will Romano

Neurosis The Eye Of Every Storm (Neurot)



No one does heavy quite like Neurosis. The Oakland band's follow-up to their collaboration with Jarboe is a multifarious blend of brain-jarring experi-metal, mid-tempo songcraft, and delicate yet eerie arrangements. On opener "Burn," **JASON ROEDER** unveils a steady 6/8 over a serene minor-chord melody before things burst into the metallic zone and Roeder flies off the handle. During the title track, Roeder knocks out a crisp beat over moody organ, nature-based samples, groggy vocals, and enchanting backup chants. And the light/heavy contrast on "A Season In The Sky" is prime Neurosis. *The Eye* sometimes evokes the trippy prog of Hawkwind and Pink Floyd, yet it ultimately defies classification.

Jeff Perlah

Ministry Houses Of The Mole (Sanctuary)

Industrial icons Ministry return with their strongest album since *Psalm 69*, pounding out their trademark fury amongst political sound-bites. As expected with this band, the drums are a mix of live and programmed beats—a key to their sound. As convincing as the programming is, **MARK BAKER**'s live drum performance is superior. Playing in a straightforward, locked down, driving manner that maintains the aesthetic, Baker brings out the mission of the band better, adding to the angst and anger. Yet the album succeeds as a whole, generating a scorched wasteland of sound.

Martin Patmos

Faces Five Guys Walk Into A Bar... (Rhino)

This blistering four-CD set of one of rock 'n' roll's greatest unsung bands goes a long way in establishing overdue respect to mighty drummer **KENNEY JONES**. Derided in the '70s as glammy British roosters with nothing but booze and brawds on their minds, *Five Guys* reveals The Faces as easily on par with Britain's other major '70s export, The Rolling Stones. Led by the then vital Rod Stewart, The Faces delivered raucous pub rock, blues bawlers, country crawlers, and plenty of hard-fought rock 'n' roll. Featuring several excellent songwriters, the band's full impact is realized beautifully on "Too Bad," a charging smoker driven hard by Jones' fat hi-hat slashing and locomotive beat. Always renowned for his power (who else could have replaced Keith Moon in The Who?), the collection reveals subtle elements in Jones' arsenal, such as the swinging bass drum bombs of "Evil," the dancing tom and hi-hat groove of "As Long As You Tell Him," the swamp dirge attack of "Insurance," and the tremendous floating cymbals and full-tilt boogie bombast of "You're My Girl." Kenney Jones, take a bow!

Ken Micallef

A Trio Of Indie-Jazz Trios

by Jeff Potter

The debut from the drummer-led **BEN HANS** Trio, *Drums! Bass! Guitar!*, shows taste, technique, and a flair for the classic. Hans swings with assured economy, buoying the equally talented **Jeff Schroedl** (guitar) and **Mark Solveson** (bass). (www.benhans.com)

Guitarist **Joshua Breakstone**'s seventeenth disc, *A Jamais*, showcases his bopping, fat-toned, single-note soloing. For this outing, recorded in France, Breakstone tapped one of the country's best drummers, **JOEL ALLOUCHE**, who percolates with strong urgent time and crisp chops. (www.caprirecords.com)

Pianist **Carlos Cuevas'** *Depiction* heralds a noteworthy up-and-comer. The compelling keyboardist is rooted in straight-ahead, but his eclectic writing navigates breathtaking left turns. Drummer **JIMMY BRANLY** seamlessly unfolds the complex tunes, swinging hard, taking chances, and dancing "loosely" around the tight hits. (www.carloscuevas.com)

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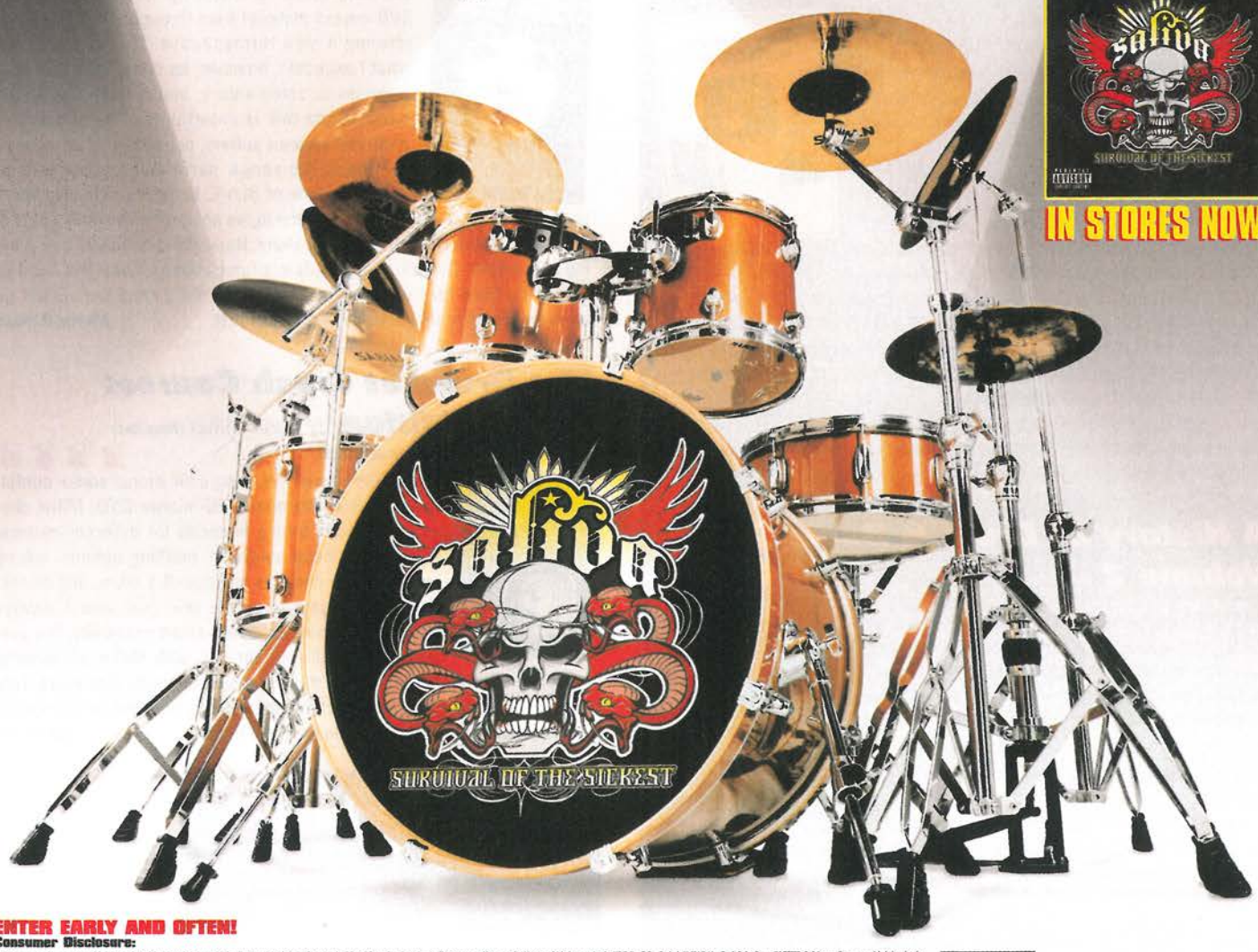

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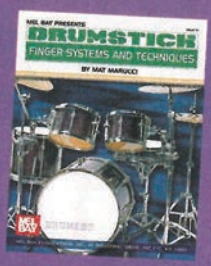

For some, reading this book will be like finding the Holy Grail, representing an end to a search for information on drumming finger techniques. Others may find they are already doing some of these things, but that the book clarifies and expands on what they know. Either way, Marucci's descriptions of the different ways the fingers can be used to manipulate the stick are a welcome addition to drumming literature.

The author begins with holding the sticks and basic strokes in traditional and matched grips, and continues with a detailed explanation of rebound control. He then builds from this foundation to discuss finger pulls, squeezes, and specialized techniques like dribbling. Then it's time to build them up, mix them up, and work on triples, quadruplets, and adding accents.

At less than 50 pages, this is certainly a quick read. But the information within will take much longer to master. Photos and illustrations are used throughout to illuminate the text. Anyone looking to improve their technique and awareness of how they play should check out this book. **Martin Patmos**

Master Drummers Of West Africa

researched and compiled by Jerry Leake (Rhombus)

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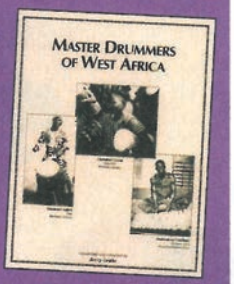


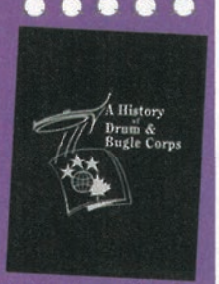
This is an intimate visit to West Africa with drummer Jerry Leake, who, in his quest for knowledge, has gone so far as to live with families of drummers in Ghana and Burkina Faso. Amazing musical doors are opened here, and many concepts are discussed, including how to apply African rhythms to the drumset.

Drumming is considered a "language" in Africa, and call & response (question & answer) is the norm. Leake suggests listening and responding to rhythm not in terms of meter, but as "melodies and melodic shapes." (Meter became an issue only when he had to write the music down!) Many photographs depicting the Ewe, Dagomba, and Griot ensembles, dancers, playing positions, proper stick technique, and even drum-making and tuning are included here. A list of recommended reading and listening will greatly expand one's knowledge of African drumming.

Note: Leake is about to complete a volume on West African and North and South Indian rhythm theory (relating sound and time) containing *four hundred* pages and two music CDs. (www.rhombuspublishing.com) **David Licht**

A History Of Drum & Bugle Corps, Volume 2 (Sights & Sounds)

level: all, $70 (US), $95 (Canada)



This 432-page "coffee table" book is the must-have sequel for drum corps fans young and old. Over 100 individuals contributed to thorough histories of 86 junior and senior corps across North America, from The Anaheim Kingsmen to The Yankee Rebels. Other chapters include drum corps in the armed forces, the art and science of drum corps judging, drum corps periodicals, and "the birth, growth, and metamorphosis of competitive rudimental drumming" by Rick Beckham. If a picture is worth 1,000 words, just imagine what over 1,000 pictures say! Thanks to publisher Steve Vickers for continuing to put his life's passion between hard covers. (www.drumcorpsworld.com) **Andrea Byrd**

DVDs

Gene Krupa Jazz Legend (Warner Bros.)

level: all, $39.95

During the heyday of swing music, Gene Krupa brought drumming to the forefront of American pop music culture, with his charismatic showmanship and energetic drum solo features. Krupa was so popular, in fact, that Hollywood made a movie of his life, with Gene providing the soundtrack. This DVD reissue of a 1993 video chronicles Krupa's superstar career, from his early years in Chicago to his matinee-idol status with The Benny Goodman Band. Rare film and TV footage includes the classic drum solo in Goodman's "Sing, Sing, Sing." The disc appropriately closes with a star-studded drum battle featuring Krupa, Buddy Rich, Lionel Hampton, and Mel Tormé. Commentary from Louie Bellson and narration by the late Steve Allen make this an outstanding historic document that belongs in every drummer's library. **Mike Haid**

Cheap Trick From Tokyo To You (Big 3)

level: all, $19.98

Recorded live in Japan, where the band has a huge and long-standing following, Cheap Trick's new DVD covers material from throughout their career, offering a nice retrospective. The format is not what I expected, however, as songs alternate with interviews, commentary, and history-lite by the band. While this is entertaining, the sense of a captured concert suffers, especially when considering that the songs' performances are incomplete. For fans of Bun E. Carlos's drumming, there are some good close-up shots, but the lights are pretty low on his part of the stage for the wide-angle group shots. Basically it looks like he's playing in the dark. Overall, though, this is a fun glimpse of who this band is, which die-hard fans will certainly enjoy. But the casual fan should go back and listen to their classic recordings first. **Martin Patmos**

The Drumset Crash Course: Tuning Edition by Russ Miller (Warner Bros.)

level: intermediate to advanced, $19.95

Russ Miller's award-winning educational series continues with this informative 90-minute DVD. Miller discusses various tuning methods for different musical styles, drum head selection, muffling options, miking concepts, the complex makeup of a drum, and choosing the right gear to create your own sound, always with a down-to-earth, street-smart sensibility. The production is well-thought-out, with Miller performing musical examples of the various stylistic tuning methods discussed. Lots of bonus footage and special features make this a worthwhile investment for drummers seeking knowledge on these topics. **Mike Haid**

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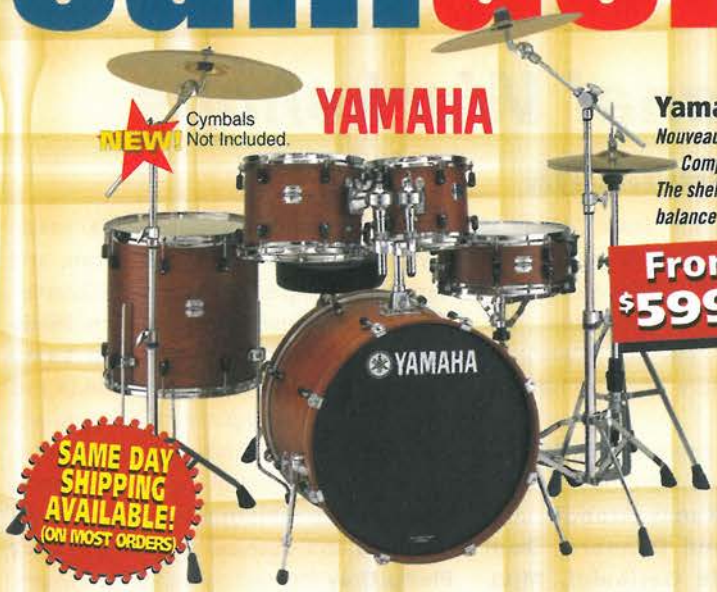

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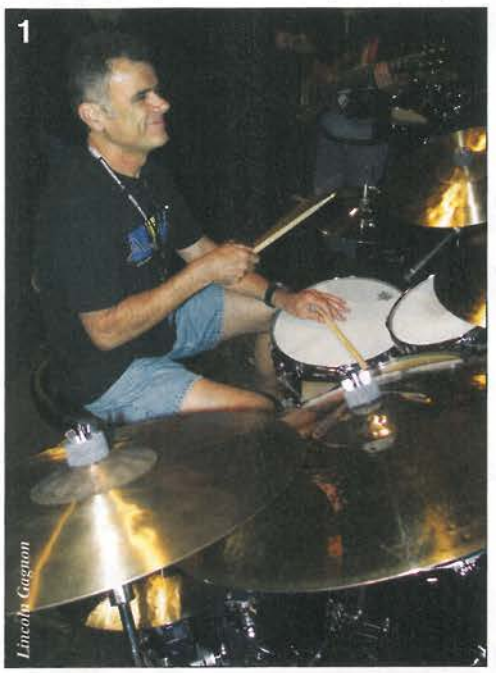
KoSA International Workshops

KoSA Vermont

The ninth KoSA International Percussion Workshop—held this past July 26–August 1 at Castleton State College in Vermont—brought students of all ages together in a "camp" setting with a faculty of premier artists and educators. This year's theme was "Feel It," referring to the emotional nature of contemporary percussion.

Led by artistic director **Aldo Mazza**, the faculty featured drumset artists **Robby Ameen**, **Kenny Aronoff**, **Jim Chapin**, **Kenwood Dennard**, **Dom Famularo**, **David Garibaldi**, **Mike Mangini**, **Jerry Mercer**, **Jeff Salisbury**, and *MD* senior editor **Rick Van Horn**. Ethnic percussion was represented by world percussionist **Memo Acevedo**, Italian tambourine specialist **Alessandra Belloni**, legendary conga master **Candido Camero** and young conga phenom **Richie Flores**, taiko authority **Marco Lienhard**, Brazilian percussion specialist **Mario Monaco**, African drumming and dance master **Oumar N'Diaye**, Spanish flemenco drummer **Salvado Niebla**, Indian rhythmic master **Trichy Sankaran**, and frame drumming star **Glen Velez**, Canadian percussion ensemble **Répercussion**, **Mario DeCiutiis**, **Allan Molnar**, and **Larry Marchese** offered classes on electronic percussion and computer music technology. Educator/performer **John Beck** conducted the orchestral percussion track, while studio vibist/percussionist **Emil Richards** and classical marimbist **D'Arcy Phillip Gray** focused on mallet techniques. New rhythmic approaches for performance on the didjeridu were taught by **Lou Robinson**.

The camp also included the KoSA Music Festival, which presented faculty members in nightly performances. Friday's participant recital gave students the opportunity to demonstrate what they had learned. On that same evening, KoSA artistic director Aldo Mazza presented a plaque honoring the memory of *Modern Drummer* founder



Drumset instructors at KoSA included Tower Of Power drummer David Garibaldi (1), Canadian rock veteran Jerry Mercer (2), Spanish flamenco authority Salvador Niebla (3), the irrepressible Mike Mangini (4), drummer/multi-instrumentalist Kenwood Dennard (5), and studio/touring star Kenny Aronoff (6).

Ron Spagnardi to *MD*'s Rick Van Horn. A faculty recital on Saturday capped the week's activities.

Sponsors for KoSA 2004 included Asano Taiko, Audix, Australian Originals, drumKAT, Drum Workshop, Drummers Collective, Evans, HQ Percussion, Latin Percussion, Ludwig/Musser, Mike Balter, *Modern Drummer*, Monolith, Mountain Rythym, Paiste, Pearl, Pro-Mark, Regal Tip, Remo, Sabian, Shure, Sibelius, Tama, Technics, Virtual Drummer School, Yamaha, and Zildjian.

Classes in Latin percussion were conducted by drummer Robby Ameen (7) and congueros Candido Camero (8) and Richie Flores (9).

Mallet artistry was demonstrated by studio legend Emil Richards (10), while John Beck led the orchestral percussion track (11).

Trichy Sankaran explained the intricacies of South East Indian rhythmic structures.

MD senior editor (and KoSA instructor) Rick Van Horn accepted a plaque honoring the memory of MD founder Ron Spagnardi from KoSA artistic director Aldo Mazza.

For more information on any KoSA event, contact KoSA at PO Box 333, Station A, Montreal, Quebec, Canada H3C 2S1, (800) 541-8401, info@kosamusic.com, www.kosamusic.com.

KoSA Cuba

KoSA offered drum enthusiasts a one-week study program in Cuba, from April 26 through May 2. Participants from the US, Canada, and Europe had the chance to study with renowned Cuban drummers **Piloto** and **"El Peje,"** along with percussionists **Jean San Cristobal Figueron** and **Julio Lopez Sanchez**. Daily hands-on sessions included congas, timbales, bongos, drumset, history, rhythm section labs, and performing opportunities. Evening concerts featured top Cuban artists such as as Chucho Valdez and Havana Ensemble.

All classes and nightly concerts were held at the luxurious El Senador hotel complex. Excursions allowed participants to explore a local town and interact with residents there. Instruments and equipment for the workshops were provided through the support of Evans, Korg, Latin Percussion, Moperc, Pearl, Sabian, Taye, and Zildjian.

Cuban drum legend Piloto taught drumset and conducted multi-percussion workshops.

Julio Lopez Sanchez gave instruction on congas.

Drum star/instructor "El Peje" (center left) and KoSA artistic director Aldo Mazza (center right) are flanked by two students.

PercFest 2004

Drums, sun, sea, and fun were the order of the day at the eighth annual PercFest, held June 24–27 in Laigueglia on the shores of the Mediterranean in northern Italy. The festival is dedicated to the memory of Italian percussionist Giuseppe "Naco" Bonaccorso, who in 1996 was killed in a car accident following a solo concert.

Drummers and percussionists from across Europe gathered to take part in classes, workshops, and spontaneous drumming activities throughout the four days of PercFest. Clubs, village squares, and even the beach became venues for classes, drum circles, and after-hours jam sessions. Since the festival was totally free and open to the public, interested passers-by could—and enthusiastically did—participate.

Each morning began with a "fitness session" on the beach, with several drummers and percussionists providing the rhythmic background for calisthenics led by a skilled trainer. Evenings were capped by concert performances at the ninth annual Laigueglia Jazz Festival.

Some of Italy's top drummers led drumset classes. These included studio and touring drummer Christian Meyer, pop/rock master Maxx Furian, jazz and studio great Ellade Bandini, progressive rock star Walter Calloni, metal veteran Roberto Gualdi, and fusion sensation Luca Capitani. Studio veteran Paolo Pellegatti later joined Meyer, Furian, Bandini, and Calloni for an evening performance by La Drumeria, a unique all-drummer super-group with a hit CD in Europe.

Ethnic percussion was represented by Gilson Silveira (Brazil), Ernesttico (Cuba), and Arup Kanti and the Baul Of Bengal ensemble (India). Other classes focused on music theory, music history, and drumming for children.

The Sunday finale concert closed with a tune dedicated to Naco, led by his brother (and PercFest producer) Rosario Bonaccorso. All of the PercFest "faculty" and performers gathered onstage, and were joined by the entire audience in a moving musical tribute. Sponsors for PercFest included Berimbau, Latin Percussion, Tama, UFIP, Yamaha, and Zildjian. For more information go to www.percfest.com.

La Drumeria performed at a PercFest evening concert. This "super-group" consists of (from left) Paolo Pellegatti, Walter Calloni, Ellade Bandini, Christian Meyer, and Maxx Furian—each an Italian drum star in his own right.

Gilson Silveira (seated) conducted classes in Brazilian and world percussion.

Multi-percussionist Ernesttico demonstrated combined drumset and conga technique.

A seaside master class was given by progressive/metal drummer Roberto Gualdi.

High-energy contemporary fusion techniques were the subject of Luca Capitani's classes.

Concert performer Roberto Gatto is considered one of Italy's top jazz drummers.

MD's Rick Van Horn (foreground) joined Christian Meyer, Ellade Bandini, and an enthusiastic group of volunteer percussionists for one of PercFest's morning fitness sessions on the beach.

Mendoza International Drum Fest

The first Mendoza (Argentina) International Drum Fest was held this past June 19 and 20. International drum stars, as well as national and local drummers, came to share their talents and techniques.

First up on Saturday was local percussionist Octavio Sanchez, who demonstrated the different voices that can be drawn from the congas. Next, Argentine drummer Daniel Piazzolla shared concepts of jazz and funk styles. Then Jota Morelli (also from Argentina) played songs he performed with Al Jarreau, demonstrating precision and technique. He also explained how to tune and prepare drums before recording in a studio. Brazil's Vera Figueiredo closed Saturday with a powerhouse display of Brazilian rhythms. She also played songs from her CD *Vera Cruz Island*, holding everyone spellbound.

Day two started with local drummer Marcelo Paez, whose performance featured double-pedal playing and stick juggling. Next, Daniel Volpini played different varieties of tunes, sounds, and colors. He also talked about the Argentinian Drummers Club, of which he is president. Rock drummer Marcelo Mira spoke about the drumming of John Bonham and Ian Paice, then closed with an energetic solo played with his bare hands.

The international flavor of the festival was underscored by Sunday's closer, Swiss drummer JoJo Mayer. He focused on drum 'n' bass playing, and also explained some of the movements involved in his incredible hand and foot technique. After receiving a standing ovation, JoJo brought all the artists (along with organizer Gustavo Meli) on stage for a finale that finished with everyone drumming on the stage floor. Go to www.mendozadrumfest.com.ar for information.

JoJo Mayer was a featured artist at the first Mendoza International Drum Fest in Argentina.

Brazilian drum star Vera Figueiredo was mobbed by autograph seekers following her inspirational performance.

Former Al Jarreau drummer Jota Morelli (left) and rock powerhouse Marcelo Mira were among the native Argentine performers.

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Pamela Lynn

Vancouver, Canada's Pamela Lynn is a freestyle hand percussionist and professional drum facilitator. While pursuing a childhood talent for drumming, she progressed from playing simple rhythms on household items to mastering an impressive array of traditional and original techniques on drums and percussion instruments from around the world.

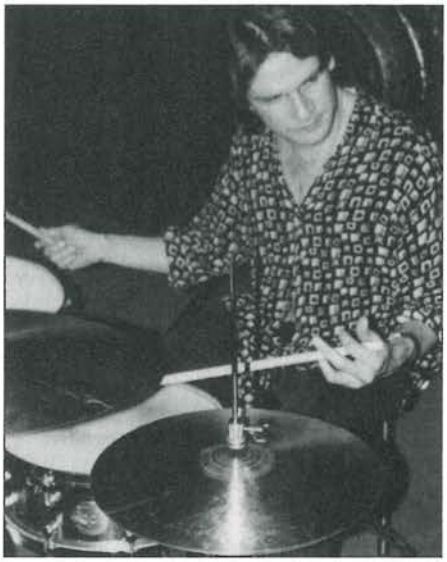
Pamela is essentially self-taught, but has honed her skills through work with master drum facilitator Arthur Hull and facilitator/educator John Yost. In addition, Pamela graduated from Remo's Health Rhythms training program conducted by Barry Bittman and Christine Stevens.

A natural sense of artistry and enthusiasm for her work enables Pamela to be a dynamic entertainer and an inspirational teacher, sharing her gifts with an ever-growing audience. She will soon release an instructional DVD, and in the meantime is active on the circuit of world drum festivals and workshops (www.freestyledrumming.com). Her mission, she says, is to continue her path as an artist while also promoting hand drumming and drum circles to mainstream popular culture.

Hector Navarette

Hector Navarette was born in Mexico City in 1968 and began his drumming career twelve years later. He was influenced by everything from ethnic marimba music from Guatemala (where both his parents were born) to Jimi Hendrix, King Crimson, KISS, and Rush, along with Afro-Cuban, big band, and classical styles. His early studies at drum stores and with private teachers led to a summer program at Boston's Berklee College Of Music in 1985. After that, he returned to Mexico to tour heavy metal clubs with a band called Ultimatum, which gained notoriety by winning a music contest sponsored by Bacardi.

Hector returned to the US to study at Musicians Institute in Los Angeles, where he graduated with honors in 1989. Later that year he appeared at one of the first major drumming events to be held in Mexico City, playing a duet with the legendary Billy Cobham. In 2000 Hector appeared at the Mexico City Drumfest alongside Doane Perry, Luis Conte, Nicko McBrain, and Alex Gonzales. This led to endorsements with Premier, Paiste, and Vic Firth.



Hector established his own drum school in 2002, which he says keeps him very busy. He also writes articles for the Argentinean Drum Club. At the same time, he records and tours with several Latin American artists, including pop star Aleks Syntek.

Jimmy Macbride

Thirteen-year-old Jimmy Macbride of Hartford, Connecticut has been playing drums since the age of ten. He's a dedicated jazz drummer whose influences include Buddy Rich, Elvin Jones, and Dennis Chambers. He's also the drummer for Jimmy & The Hasbeens (www.dlmacbride.com/jimmy/), a band that appears regularly at community venues to raise money for Jimmy's former elementary school.

Macbride studies with Tom Melito at Central Connecticut State University. He's also attended the Litchfield Jazz Festival Summer Music School, playing in small jazz combos that perform at the festival. The drummer regularly sits in with such jazz luminaries as Claire Daly, Nat Reeves, and Steve Davis, and was invited by the Mitchell/Ruff Duo to be a performer at Yale University as part of the school's tricentennial celebration. Jimmy plays a Yamaha drumset with Paiste cymbals and Pearl pedals. He also uses LP accessories, along with a collection of hand drums and percussion from Bali, Africa, and China.

In 2003, Jimmy received the Larrie Londin Memorial Scholarship from the Percussive Arts Society. In 2003 and again in 2004, he was named top soloist in the Junior High division in *Down Beat*'s "Outstanding Student Performers" listing. His goals include attending a top music school and eventually becoming a professional drummer based jointly in New York City and Los Angeles.

If you'd like to appear in *On The Move*, send us a CD, cassette, DVD, or videotape of your best work (preferably both solo and with a band) on three or four songs, along with a brief bio sketch and a high-quality color or black & white close-up photo. (Polaroids are not acceptable. Photos will not be paid for or credited.) The bio sketch should include your full name and age, along with your playing style(s), influences, current playing situation (band, recording project, freelance artist, etc.), how often and where you are playing, and what your goals are (recording artist, session player, local career player, etc.). Include any special items of interest pertaining to what you do and how you do it, and a list of the equipment you use regularly. Send your material to On The Move, Modern Drummer Publications, 12 Old Bridge Road, Cedar Grove, NJ 07009. Material **cannot** be returned, so please **do not** send original tapes or photos.

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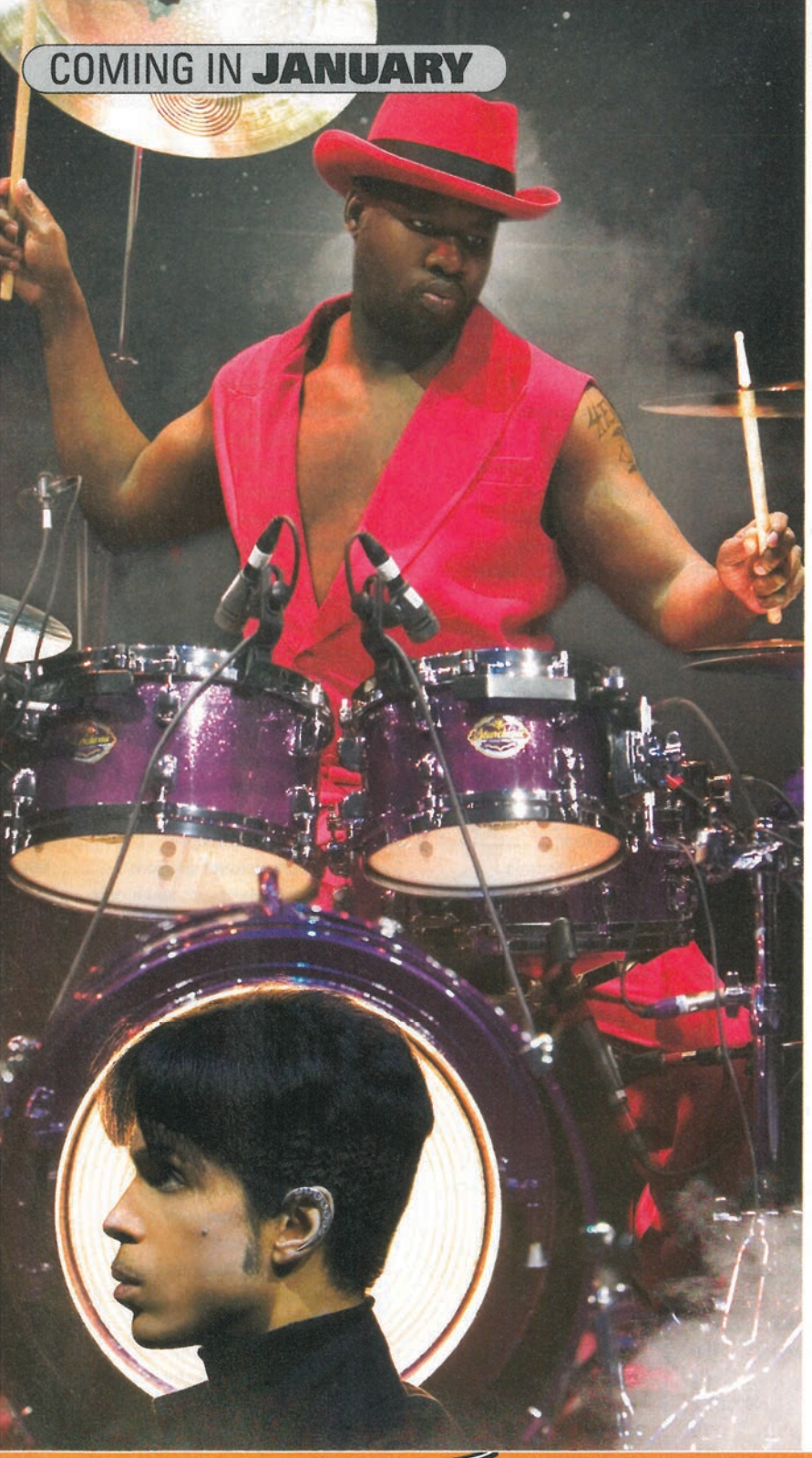

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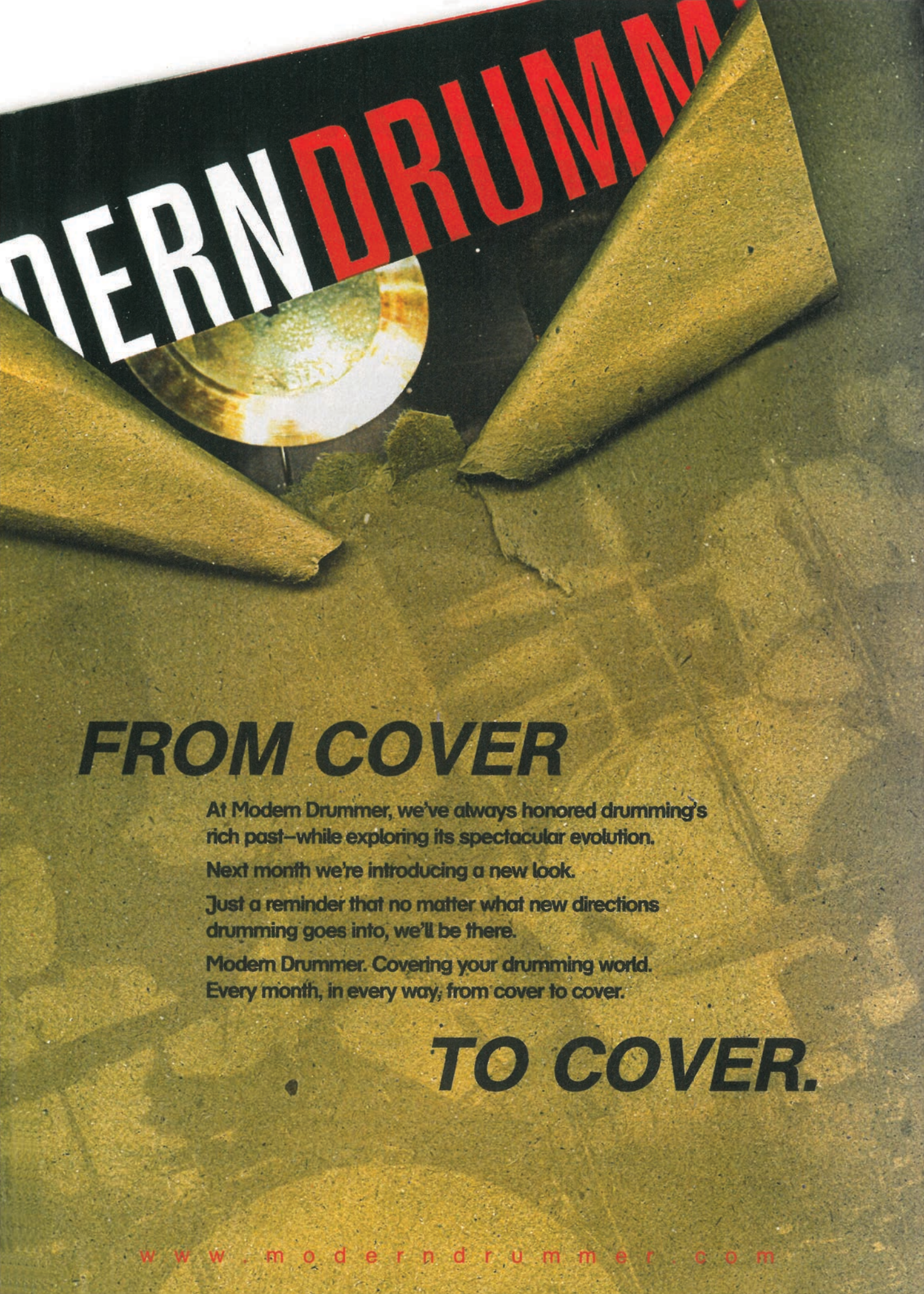

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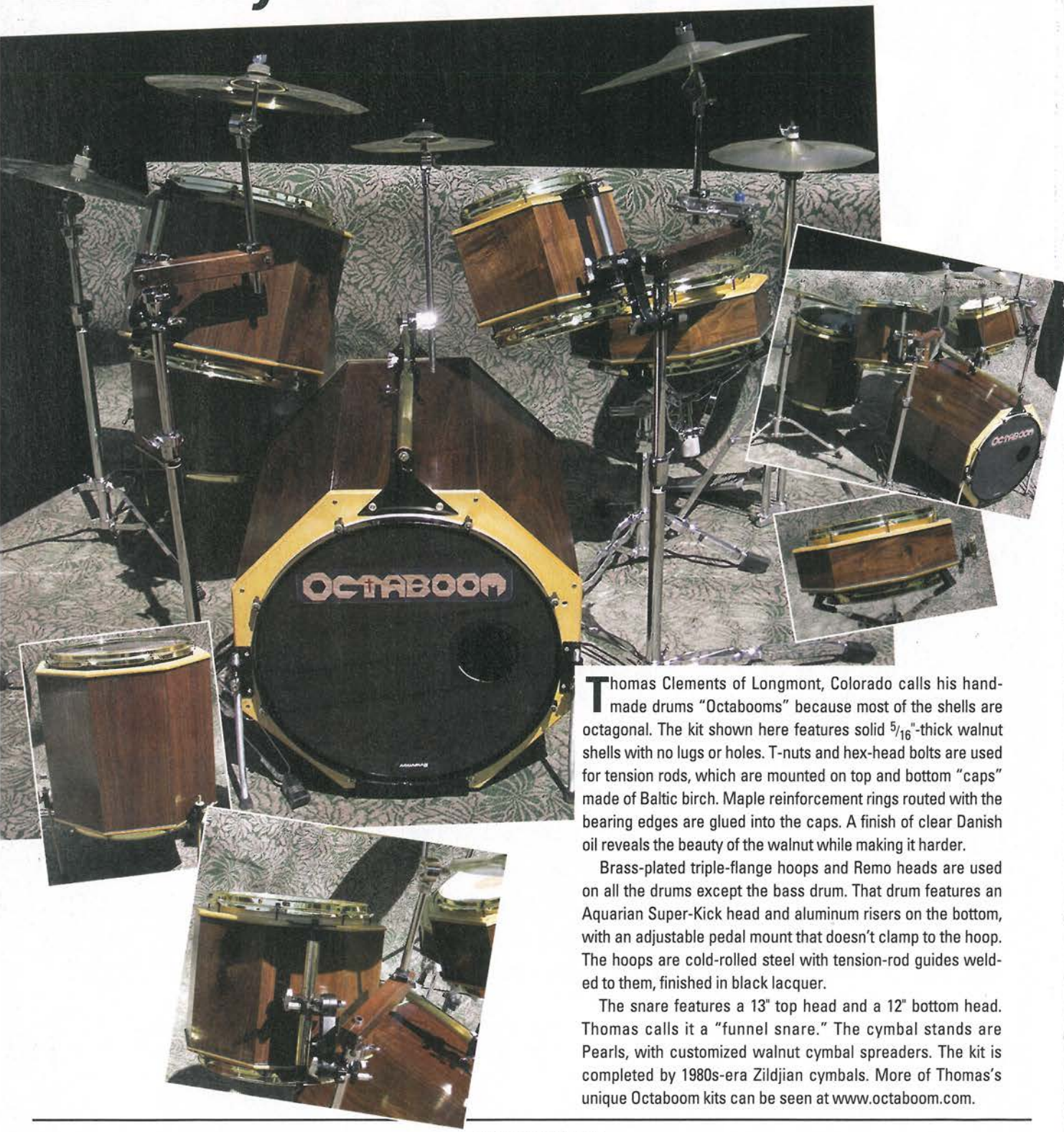

Thomas Clements of Longmont, Colorado calls his handmade drums "Octabooms" because most of the shells are octagonal. The kit shown here features solid $^{5}/_{16}$"-thick walnut shells with no lugs or holes. T-nuts and hex-head bolts are used for tension rods, which are mounted on top and bottom "caps" made of Baltic birch. Maple reinforcement rings routed with the bearing edges are glued into the caps. A finish of clear Danish oil reveals the beauty of the walnut while making it harder.

Brass-plated triple-flange hoops and Remo heads are used on all the drums except the bass drum. That drum features an Aquarian Super-Kick head and aluminum risers on the bottom, with an adjustable pedal mount that doesn't clamp to the hoop. The hoops are cold-rolled steel with tension-rod guides welded to them, finished in black lacquer.

The snare features a 13" top head and a 12" bottom head. Thomas calls it a "funnel snare." The cymbal stands are Pearls, with customized walnut cymbal spreaders. The kit is completed by 1980s-era Zildjian cymbals. More of Thomas's unique Octaboom kits can be seen at www.octaboom.com.

PHOTO REQUIREMENTS

1. Photos must be high-quality and in color. 35mm slides are preferred; color prints will be considered; Polaroids not accepted. 2. You may send more than one view of the kit. 3. Only show drums, no people. 4. Shoot drums against a neutral background. Avoid "busy" backgrounds. 5. Clearly highlight special attributes of your kit. Send photo(s) to: Drumkit Of The Month, Modern Drummer, 12 Old Bridge Road, Cedar Grove, NJ 07009-1288. Photos cannot be returned.

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